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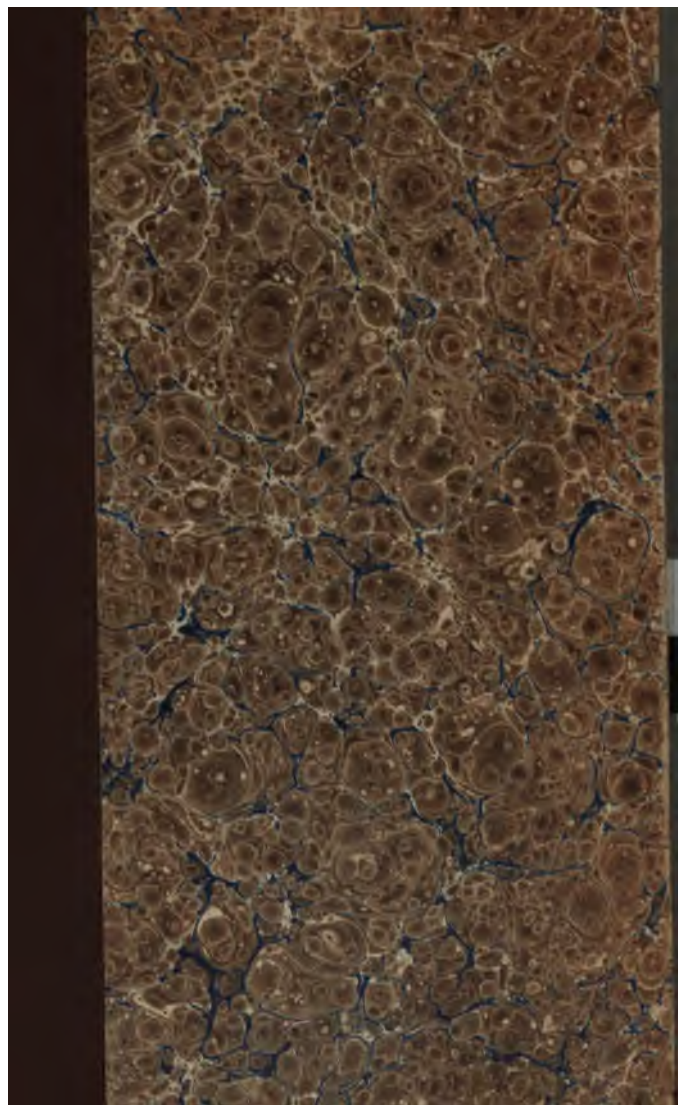
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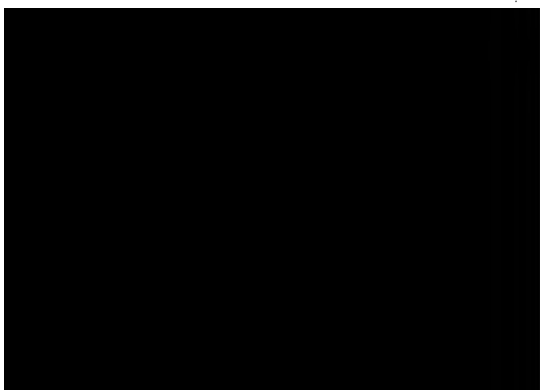
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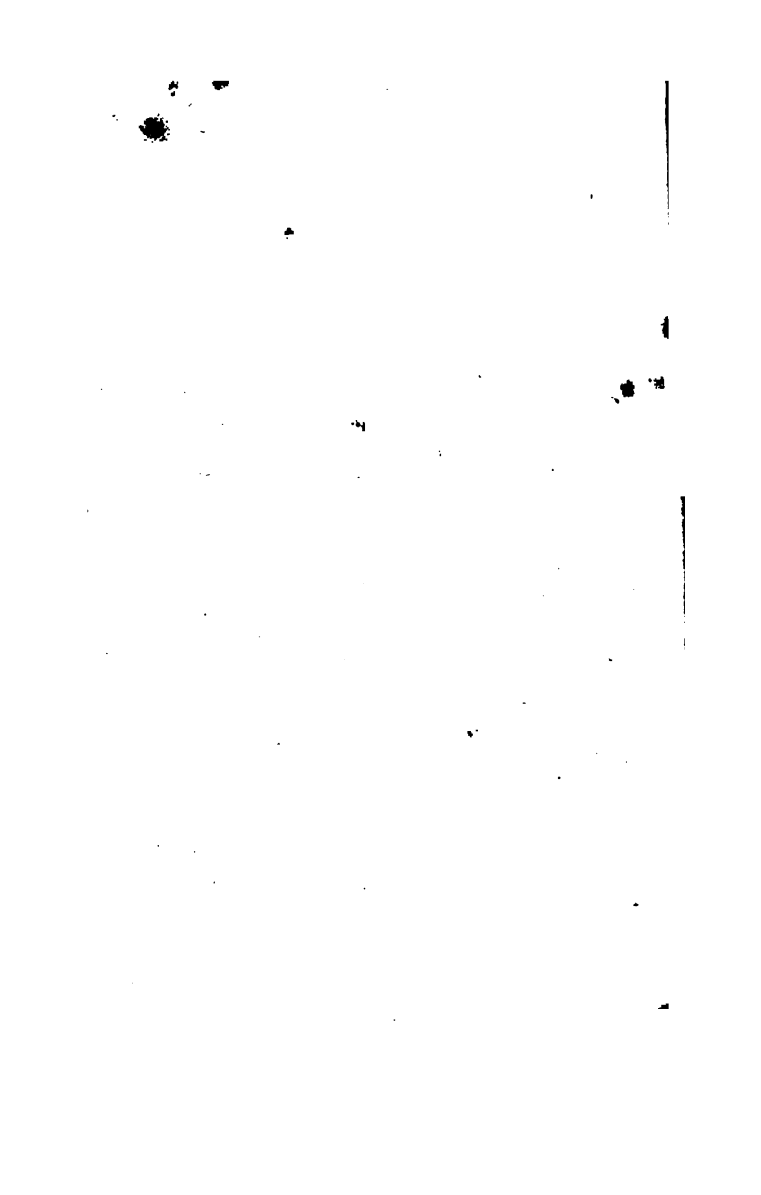


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A GUIDE

FOR



YOUNG DISCIPLES

of the

Holy Saviour.



A GUIDE
FOR
YOUNG DISCIPLES
OF THE
HOLY SAVIOUR,
IN
THEIR WAY TO IMMORTALITY:

FORMING A SEQUEL TO
PERSUASIVES TO EARLY PIETY.

BY J. G. PIKE.

THIRD EDITION.

"Christian is the highest style of man."

LONDON:
RICHARD BAYNES, 28, PATERNOSTER-ROW;
ALSO BY T. RICHARDSON, WILKINS AND SON,
AND BY THE AUTHOR, DERBY.

MDCCCXXXI.



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ADVERTISEMENT

TO THIS EDITION.

IN compliance with the suggestions of several friends, the Author has endeavoured to render this Work more suitable to the young by some diminution of its size. To effect this, he has altogether omitted the Introductory Essay on the Divine Origin of Christianity, which had no necessary connexion with the remainder of the volume; and which with some additions it is designed to publish in a distinct form. He has carefully revised the whole of the Guide, and by omitting occasionally a few words, or a few lines by abbreviating some quotations, and by transferring some passages from the text to the notes in a smaller type, has materially reduced the size and price of the work, without rendering it a mere abridgment of the former edition. The number of chapters is lessened, but this arises not from the omission of any chapter but from remodelling, and as the writer apprehends improvement in some parts of the arrangement, and thus combining two chapters into one. This remark principally applies to the first six chapters of the first edition, which form the first three in this. If the Author may venture to express his own opinion, it is, that this edition in consequence of its more compressed form, will be found better adapted than the former edition to promote the spiritual benefit of the *generality* of young readers.

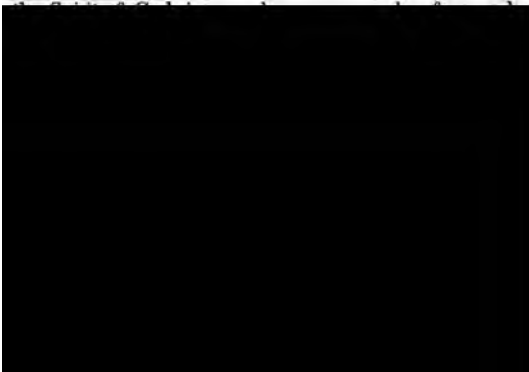
PREFATORY ADDRESS.

WHILE, my young friend, a few fleeting years will fix you in that awful world, where the business of life will longer engage, and its amusements will have no power to arm ; while every moment hurries on your final hour, and every beating pulse beats nearer to the last ; while endless woes rise in solemn succession before you, and death, at the hour, is ready to introduce you to those unbounded and amazing scenes ;—O what is worth a thought except the favour of God, and glory in the heavens ! O what is worthy of a moment's care, compared with making your calling and election sure ! to this momentous subject I now solicit your attention. The design of another little volume,* which I have addressed to the young, is to urge them to make that religion their choice, which renders its possessors rich in poverty, and happy in affliction ; secure in danger, and triumphant in death. In this is the principal design is the benefit of those who have found the path of peace. May I address you as such a happy person ? Are you a partaker of that grace, which comes from God, and leads the soul to him ? Is he your Father and your friend ? Is the blessed Jesus your Saviour ? Can you contemplate heaven as your home ? and read your title clear to an everlasting mansion in that happy country, which lies beyond the stormy sea of time ? If you can, *rejoice in the Lord always*. The things unseen will not deceive you. They will not perish, when all that is seen shall fade, and droop, and die. Let

* Persuasives to Early Piety.

earth, if it will, be all delusion, for heaven is all reality. I all below be treacherous shadow, for all above is enduring substance. If, my young friend, through grace, those unse realities are your portion, the cross of Christ your glory, an heaven your home, still you have need to *grow in grace*, an *in the knowledge of your Lord and Saviour Jesus Chris*

To be a Christian indeed is widely different from wh multitudes suppose. The Christian character, as delineat in the Scriptures, is one of a most peculiar and elevated n ture. It rises almost as much above the ideas apparent entertained of it by many professors of the gospel, as it do above those of the careless followers of the world. In tin like these, when no prison opens its doors to receive Christi victims as its prey, when no flames call for martyrs to gi the persecutor's rage, it is an easy thing to profess religio and if to add to that profession a character fair in hum sight, and an attention to religious privileges, were sufficie to constitute a Christian, many would deserve that exalt name ; but all this, and much more than this, will not co stitute a Christian. A Christian in reality, as described :



PREFATORY ADDRESS.

v

, the character which you sustain ? or do you view it as so highly elevated for your desires and aims ? If you do, you in the last hours of life maintain the same opinion ? Is this momentary scene of care and vanity is closing you for ever ; when it no longer matters what you suffer or what you enjoyed ; when the overwhelming scenes of the eternal world are ready to burst upon your soul, will you then think that piety could be too elevated, or the *Christian upon earth too nearly like the Christian in heaven ?* I do seriously believe that, in your dying moments, you will think it possible to be too pious ; if you do indeed believe that, when going to meet your God, you will think it possible to love, or serve, or honour him too much ; then read the advice this little book contains. If you can suppose that when you have plunged into the unseen world, and are rewarded in happiness or woe for more myriads of millions of years than there are drops in the ocean ; that then you will find you could be too earnest, too prayerful, too diligent, in striving for an everlasting state ; if you can indeed think so, you need read no further. But if, instead of this, you feel convinced, that when you die and come to meet your God, you will find you think all faith weak, all love cold, all diligence careless, all labour idleness, and all piety scarcely worth the name, compared with that faith, and love, and zeal, and piety, which the eternal God, the eternal Saviour, an immortal soul, and endless heaven demand ; if you will think so ;—and will you not as surely as you are born to die ?—O then aim at nobler things than that which satisfies so many ! Stay not in the lowly beneath, but, as at death you will wish to have done, strive to the heights above. O learn to live as having soon to die, so that you may die assured of living with God for ever ! The principal object of this little book, is to assist you in your Christian pilgrimage, though at times it may contain a few sentences more suitable to those who are strangers to religion,

than to those who have embraced the gospel ; for p
some that know not God, may glance over the foll
pages.

Let the writer be permitted to add, that in drawing
small volume with the design of assisting youthful pie
has endeavoured to draw instruction from the Sacred V
that only fountain of real wisdom.

That holy book declares, that neither is he that p
any thing, neither he that watereth, but God that
the increase. To his all-important blessing the writer
fore now commends this little volume.

Derby, July 16th, 1823.



CHAPTER I.

A BRIEF SCRIPTURAL DELINEATION OF THE ATTRIBUTES AND PERFECTIONS OF GOD, AND ON CHRISTIAN DEVOTEDNESS TO HIM.

§ 1. **W**ERE you, my young friend, going to spend one hour in England, and then never to see it more, but afterwards to pass threescore years in India, of which country would you desire the most extensive knowledge? Would you not reason, The knowledge that will benefit me but for one hour in a country, which after that I shall never visit again, is unworthy of a thought, compared with that knowledge, which will be useful to me for sixty years? Were you to spend that one hour in company with persons, whose favour or displeasure would render it either a happy or a wretched hour; and were you to pass the following sixty years with those, whose smile or frown would make them all years of happiness or years of pain, whose favour would you be most anxious to enjoy? Would you not argue, The smiles or the frowns of those who can cheer or embitter but one hour, and whom then I shall leave for ever, are of little moment; but their friendship, who must render me happy or wretched for sixty years, is ten thousand times more important? Apply these thoughts to your state in this world, and the next. Here you have a little while to spend, but compared with the endless life which awaits you there, it is infinitely less than an hour, when compared with sixty years. Of which world is the knowledge most important to you? Of that where your life is the twinkling of an eye? or of that where eternal ages lie stretched before the view of the astonished soul? The friendship or displeasure of your fellow-creatures may cheer or embitter life's short hour: the friendship of your God will brighten and bless your whole eternity; or his displeasure make eternal years one scene of darkness, bitterness, and woe. *How worthless, to a creature born for eternity, is all knowledge, compared with a holy acquaintance*

with God ! how despicable all friendship, compared with friendship and love !

§ 2. The book of nature may teach much respecting God may at least declare his eternal power and godhead, but it is the book of grace alone that unfolds the brighter glories of Jehovah. Would you be intimate with God, the God of heaven, not with the idol, philosophers frame in their imagination, then search the Scriptures. That holy volume represents the adorable God as possessed of those excellencies which should excite the deepest reverence, and the most fervent love, in the human heart.

God is a Spirit.^a He created the heavens and the earth. He said, Let there be light, and there was light.^b The sun obeys his voice;^c and the stars of heaven appear at his command.^d He is the one Jehovah,^e and the only true God. Heaven is his throne, and the earth his footstool.^f He reigneth^h King for ever.¹ He is clothed with majesty. Clouds and darkness are round about him, righteousness and judgment are the habitation of his throne.¹ He is the King eternal, immortal, invisible; the only wise God. To his enemies he is a consuming fire.ⁿ He is able to destroy both soul and body in hell.^o

In Providence, and in the works of nature, the power and majesty of God are displayed: *He killeth and maketh alive; he bringeth down to the grave and bringeth up. He maketh poor and maketh rich.^p He raiseth the storm wind, or maketh the storm a calm. He turneth rivers into a wilderness, or water-springs into dry ground; a fruitful land into barrenness;^q or a dry desert to a watered land. He saith to the snow, be thou on the earth.^r He giveth rain, and sendeth waters upon the fields.^s He feedeth fowls of the air, and clotheth the lilies of the field with than kingly glory;^t and so extensive is his providence that without him not a sparrow falleth to the ground.^u*

The sublime description of the majesty and glory of God in the fortieth chapter of Isaiah, is as much superior to the loftiest descriptions, which unassisted poets or philosophers have given of the Deity, as the God it represents is superior to them.

(a) John iv. 24. (b) Gen. i. 1, 3. (c) Job ix. 7. (d) Isa. xli. 26. (e) Mark xii. 29. (f) John xvii. 3. (g) Matt. v. 34, 35. (h) (i) Ps. xxix. 10. (k) Ps. xciii. 1. (l) Ps. xcvi. 2. (m) 1 Heb. xii. 29. (n) Matt. x. 28. (o) 1 Sam. ii. 6, 8. (p) Ps. (q) Job xxxvii. 6. (r) Job v. 10. (s) Matt. vi. 26, &c. (t) (u)

ols they extolled. *Who hath measured the waters in flow of his hand, and meted out heaven with the span, imprehended the dust of the earth in a measure, and ed the mountains in scales, and the hills in a balance? t, the nations are as a drop of a bucket, and are d as the small dust of the balance: behold, he taketh isles as a very little thing. All nations before him ; nothing; and they are counted to him less than g and vanity.*^v

vey this universe. Behold its oceans, in themselves a world. No line has ever measured their unfathom-epths. The swiftest ship would spend months or years ssing them; yet to God, those vast and fathomless are so insignificant, that he *measureth the waters of rld in the hollow of his hand*. Behold the heavens; n, the moon, the stars of light; how brilliant is their how immense their distances! but God *meteth out r with a span*; measures with a *span*, almost the least asures, that vast and boundless field of grandeur and ry. Behold the earth, its vast islands, its cloud-capt ains, its unmeasured deserts; the fertile lands of its im- continents, where numerous nations find ample room ir residence, and which require a line thousands of miles ent to measure either their length or their breadth; but are these vast regions, and this vast earth, before Jeho- *He comprehendeth the dust of the earth in a measure, iketh up the islands as an atom*. Survey the nations; as a thousand millions of human beings. How immense mber! yet to God so insignificant, that they *are as a of a bucket, and as the small dust* which lies unheeded : *balance*; as nothing, less than nothing and vanity.

. Now glance at the unsearchable wisdom and infinite ledge of God.

is the Lord of hosts, wonderful in counsel.^w God the wise.^x He seeth in secret.^y He seeth not as man for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the looketh on the heart.^z He searcheth all hearts, and standeth all the imaginations of the thoughts.^a He an inattentive spectator of what passes in his wide em- By him are actions weighed.^b The Lord looketh

xl. 12, 15, 17. (w) Isa. xxviii. 29. (x) Rom. xvi. 17. (y) Matt. vi. 4. (z) 1 Sam. xvi. 7. (a) 1 Chron. xxviii. 9. (b) 1 Sam. ii. 3.

from heaven; he beholdeth all the sons of men, he considereth all their works.^c In this vast survey, he beholds his children with peculiar love. *The eye of the Lord is upon them that fear him, upon them that hope in his mercy, to deliver their soul from death;^d to show himself strong in the behalf of them whose heart is perfect toward him.^e*

Would any wish to hide themselves from his all-piercing eye, it is impossible; for in him we live, and move, and have our being.^f He smiles in heaven; he frowns in hell. The veil of night which hides all things from the eyes of man, hides nothing from his eye. No spot in the universe can be found that is beyond the reach of his arm, or where it should cease to be said, *Thou, O God, seest me. Whither shall I go from thy Spirit? or whither shall I flee from thy presence? If I ascend up into heaven, thou art there; if I make my bed in hell, behold, thou art there. If I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea; even there shall thy hand lead me, and thy right hand shall hold me. If I say, Surely the darkness shall cover me; even the night shall be light about me. Yea, the darkness hideth not from thee; but the night shineth as the day: the darkness and the light are both alike to thee.^g*

§ 4. This adorable and all-seeing God is holy and amiable in the highest degree. *He is glorious in holiness.^h There is none holy as the Lord.ⁱ He is of purer eyes than to behold evil, and cannot look on iniquity.^k Just and true are his ways.^l He is the faithful God,^m who keepeth truth for ever.ⁿ*

“High o’er the earth his mercy reigns,
“And reaches to the utmost sky;
“His truth to endless years remains,
“When lower worlds dissolve and die.”

Venerable and lovely in his holiness, he is, if possible, still more lovely in his goodness and mercy. He is *the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort.^o Of great mercy.^p A merciful God.^q There is none good but God.^r* He proclaimed his name *Jehovah, Jehovah God, merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth,*

(c) Ps. xxxiii. 13. (d) Ps. xxxiii. 18, 19. (e) 2 Chron. xvi. 9.
(f) Acts xvii. 28. (g) Ps. cxxxix. 7–12. (h) Exod. xv. 11.
(i) 1 Sam. ii. 2. (k) Hab. i. 13. (l) Rev. v. 3. (m) Deut. vii. 9.
(n) Ps. xvi. 6. (o) 2 Cor. i. 3. (p) Numb. xiv. 18. (q) Deut. iv. 31.

keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity, transgression, and sin.^a The fountain of his goodness pours forth many streams. He is *not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.*^c He is *kind to the unthankful and to the evil.*^a He is a *God ready to pardon,*^e "is gracious and full of compassion, is good to all, and his tender mercies are over all his works."^w "He is plenteous in mercy and truth."^x The world might drink at the ocean of his love, and the ocean still be full. "He giveth grace and glory, and no good thing will he withhold from them that walk uprightly."^y

He is the Father of all the righteous; "their Father in heaven;"^z "and like as a Father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear him, for he knoweth our frame, he remembereth that we are dust."^a A stronger principle of love than natural affection actuates him, "If ye, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father, who is in heaven, give good things to them that ask him."^b Parental love in its strongest form cannot rival his. "Can a woman forget her sucking child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb? yea, they may forget, yet will not I forget thee."^c Love like this cannot be measured. "Thy mercy, O Lord, is in the heavens."^d Who can measure the heights of heaven? or stretch a line from the east unto the west? Yet this were an easier task, than to tell the extent of divine love. "As the heaven is high above the earth, so great is his mercy toward them that fear him; as far as the east is from the west, so far hath he removed our transgressions from us."^e This charming excellence is his delight. "He delighteth in mercy;"^f "and taketh pleasure in those that fear him, and that hope in his mercy."^g To sum up all in a few words, "GOD IS LOVE."^h

His richest love is the love unfolded in the gospel; love, like an ocean, which has neither shore nor bottom, measure, beginning, nor end. "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life."ⁱ "God com-

(a) Exod. xxxiv. 6. (c) 2 Pet. iii. 9. (u) Luke vi. 35. (v) Neh. ix. 17.
 (w) Ps. cxlv. 8, 9. (x) Ps. lxxxvi. 5. (y) Ps. lxxxiv. 11. (z) Matt. vi. 9.
 (a) Ps. ciii. 13, 14. (b) Matt. vii. 11. (c) Isa. xlix. 15. (d) Ps. xxxvi. 5.
 (e) Ps. ciii. 11, 12. (f) Mic. vii. 18. (g) Ps. cxlvii. 11. (h) 1 John iv. 16.
 (i) John iii. 16.

mendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us."^k "Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins."^l A pious writer observes,

"When God gave us his Son, he gave us an infinitely greater gift than the world: the Creator is infinitely more glorious than the creature, and the Son of God is the Creator of all things. God can make innumerable worlds by the word of his mouth; he has but one only Son, and he spared not his only Son, but gave him to the death of the cross for us all. God's love to his people is from everlasting to everlasting: but from everlasting to everlasting there is no manifestation of it known, or conceivable by us, that can be compared to this. The light of the sun is always the same, but it shines brightest to us at noon: the cross of Christ was the noon-tide of everlasting love; the meridian splendour of eternal mercy. There were many bright manifestations of the same love before, but they were like the light of the morning, that shines more and more unto the perfect day; and that perfect day was when Christ was on the cross, when darkness covered all the land."

Pursuing his schemes of love and mercy, he appears as "the God of all grace, who hath called us to his eternal glory by Jesus Christ."^m He loveth those who love his Son.ⁿ "It is their Father's good pleasure to give them the kingdom."^o "And God is not ashamed to be called their God, for he hath prepared for them a city."^p

§ 5. All this love is like himself, eternal. "His mercy endureth for ever;"^q and "is from everlasting to everlasting upon them that fear him."^r "The heavens shall vanish away like smoke, and the earth shall wax old like a garment; but his salvation shall be for ever."^s

He who manifests this love is "the eternal God."^t "A thousand years in his sight are as yesterday when it is past, and as a watch in the night."^u One day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day."^v "He inhabiteth eternity;"^w and such is that eternity, that, compared with it, one day and a thousand years are alike; they are both so insignificant, that one appears as long as the other.

(A) Rom. v. 7, 8. (h) 1 John iv. 2, 10. (m) 1 Pet. v. 10. (n) John xvi. 27.

(o) Luke xii. 32.

(p) Heb. xi. 16.

(q) Ps. cxxxvi. 1.

(r) Ps. ciii. 17.

(s) Isa. li. 6.

(t) Deut. xxxiii. 27.

(u) Ps. xc. 4.

(v) 2 Pet. iii. 8.

(w) Isa. lvii. 15.

§ 6. What awe, what reverence should these views of God inspire! His works, how glorious! but himself how infinitely majestic! When compared with him, his vast creation is mean, as a speck of floating dust; and sun and stars like momentary sparks of fire, just seen and forgotten. Angels and arch-angels, cherubim and seraphim, shine with a glory which the loftiest language scarcely describes.* Yet thrones and dominions, principalities and powers, cherubim and seraphim, in prostrate homage bow before him, and veil their faces, and cast their crowns at his feet, and cry, "Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, who is, and was, and is to come." While such is their homage, how reverent should be yours! You, a mote, a worm, an insect, compared with them; yet they, with all their radiant majesty, insects compared with him. While they in his presence shrink into nothing, and less than nothing, what are you! How great a God is our God! Cherish the deepest reverence for him. Should such a God be treated with irreverence? Should he be mocked in professed devotion, "with solemn sounds on a thoughtless tongue?" Abhor and watch against this common sin, and humble yourself in deep abasement before him, for doubtless it has often polluted your soul.

§ 7. What deep concern for a full assurance of his favour should these views of God excite in your heart! O, could we feel but a thousandth part as much where eternity is concerned, as we do when health or comfort is at stake, how seriously and fervently should we inquire, And is God indeed my God? A single doubt would wring the heart with anguish; and uncertainty almost drive us to distraction. Pursue this blessing. If others are satisfied with a little religion, O imitate not such folly, but seek, in and by Jesus, the full assurance of faith. The power and justice of God are armed with ten thousand terrors against every one that is not his child; the love and goodness of God display ten thousand charms to every one that is. O how dreadful must it be to have him for a foe, whose thunders, lightnings, earthquakes, tempests, and pestilences can sweep millions to the grave in a moment! whose command would extinguish the sun, and crush the universe to nothing! But how inexpressibly desirable is such a friend! A friend, whose knowledge no enemy can elude; whose

(*) Rev. x. 5, 6.

(y) Rev. iv. 8.

power none can resist, whose wisdom none can bask in, whose love none can comprehend. Who bids seed-harvest, summer and winter, revolve; who kindled and stars; who rolls the moon and planets through the panse of heaven, and pours floods of light and warms the sun upon this distant earth; who saith to the sea, "be still," and to the seraph in glory, "Go," and I While all the inanimate creation obey his voice, while all bask in his smile, while the treasures of heaven are at his disposal, while nothing exists of which he is not the owner, and while devils are shrinking from his frowning, trembling beneath the chains of his wrath, O what a thing to thee, compared to God!

You have to meet this infinite God. How will you sustain him if not become his friend, his child? How will you sustain that awful day? How bear the appalling survival of infinite majesty? How will you shudder at the glimpse of the future? How tremble at the amazing future! Prepare to meet God. Whatever engages you, let God engage your most precious thoughts. Whatever claims your heart, let God take the first place there.

Much as earthly friendships and earthly cares now agitate and engage you, remember they are but the moment, compared with what shall be revealed! The time is coming when those which appear of most importance to your present comfort, and which may now tempt you with ardent interest, or inexpressible delight, shall seem of no moment, any further than as they advance your preparation for eternal scenes. Keep this in mind, and resign all your dearest interests into the hands of God; and seek your lasting good and best treasure in Him. He deserves your best affections, and your highest devotion. How much should the earnestness generally felt after the present state, impress upon you the value of mortal blessedness! and how much should the anxiety perhaps feel to secure the affections of kind and friends here, urge upon you the necessity and impossibility of possessing the love of the ever-gracious God, and Redeemer, both here and hereafter! Compared with *our Redeemer*, what are our tenderest, best, and *friends*? what even the kindest and most valued friends?

us? Their warmest affection is cold as rocks of ice, compared with that which actuated the breast of the Eternal, when he so loved the world as to give Jesus for its ransom, or with that of the divine Immanuel, when he became for us a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. The love of the foudest mortal friends is in a great degree but the return of affection; and such too is the love of man, of saints, of angels, to God. "We love him because he first loved us." The love of God was unsought, unsolicited, shown not to friends but enemies; and shown when in our character there was every thing to prevent, and nothing to produce, it. On our interest in this, an eternity is concerned; on our interest in the breasts of those we hold most dear on earth, nothing but an inch of time.

§ 8. Consider, that not merely is the favour of God eternally important to you, but that he has an entire and unalienable claim on all you have and all you are. The first and the greatest commandment is, *Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy mind, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength.* This commandment is binding upon all on earth, and all in heaven. The love it enjoins is the golden link that would bind the whole universe together in harmony and bliss. It would inspire all with one desire, and lead all to pursue one object, calculated supremely to glorify God, and to benefit man. The gospel of Jesus, while it delivers his followers from condemnation incurred by transgressing this law, takes not one jot or one tittle from our obligation to obey it; but strengthens that obligation by additional motives, and thus in fact establishes the law.

Such is the extreme deceitfulness of the human heart, that it may be useful more in detail to show what is required from those who are indeed devoted to God.

There can be no true devotedness to God, till the corrupt selfishness of the human heart is subdued. Selfishness is the root of man's depravity. He is his own idol. He would give to himself that place which God alone has a right to possess. Some of our old writers called sin deicide; probably from the idea that man, pursuing his career of sin and self-exaltation, would, if he possessed sufficient power, not stop

till he had thrust the Creator from his throne, and by destroying him had assumed that honour to himself. The notion is correct. Were the sinner possessed of sufficient might, when he had raised himself above all, except his God, he would esteem his God an enemy, and not be happy till he had advanced one step higher, and placed his throne above the throne of God. This is the tendency of the selfish depravity of the human heart, and were this corruption armed with equal power, this would be its end. When Alexander, having conquered one world wept because he had not another to conquer, if he could have carried his victorious arm into the world unseen, and have waged war against his Maker, doubtless no place lower than his Creator's throne would have satisfied the infernal ambition that governed in his bosom. Every child of man is born with this corrupt principle, though in some it afterwards appears much more prominent than in others. It is the root of human wickedness. Every human being, by having indulged it, has become an idolater, for he has preferred self to God; and given this that place in his affections, which only God deserves and justly claims.

Ah! my friend, if pharisaic notions of the goodness of human nature charm your mind, you will think the writer a poor enthusiastic creature, almost beside himself, for penning assertions so strange. But if your heart has ever been broken up, if you have ever gained a glance at the great deep of iniquity

throne when a desire to gratify the thirst of pleasure, grandeur, and power, is the governing principle in a monarch's heart. Selfishness guides the general when spreading desolation through peaceful realms, that he may be extolled as a mighty conqueror. Selfishness rules the philosopher when pursuing his studies or forming his theories, that his name may be applauded through distant days. Selfishness governs the merchant and the tradesman when labouring for riches, that they or their children may be great upon earth. Selfishness ascends the pulpit, when the preacher labours not to exalt the Lord, but to charm his hearers, and to advance his own reputation. Selfishness governs the dissolute youth, whose pursuit is worldly pleasure; and the giddy girl, whose object is the admiration of the vain flutterers around her, or whose ambition it is to be more admired than some rival trifler like herself. Selfishness descends to the lowest sphere, it governs even in a beggar's breast; and the lowly peasant, whose ambition rises no higher than to be the first man in his native village, is as much under its corrupt influence as a Napoleon, disturbing the peace, and coveting the possession, of a world. The principle is the same, the sphere of action makes the difference.

§ 10. When this corruption of human nature is not subdued, it creeps into every action, and pollutes all it touches. Generosity in relieving distress may spring from selfish motives, from a desire to be seen of men; but then, whatever benefit the relieved sufferer finds, the giver finds none; his charity is polluted by selfishness, and changed into sinful ostentation. Activity and zeal may spring from this wicked source, and their real motive be the desire of human applause. We even read of prayers offered to be seen of men; prayers that, springing from so polluted a source, must bring curses, not blessings, down on the heads of the pretended but wicked worshippers.

This is in fact the root of innumerable sins. It produces pride and ambition. Man exalts himself in his own esteem; and would fain be exalted higher. It is the source of avarice and worldly-mindedness. Man covets much for himself. It is the parent of resentment and envy. He is resentful, because *self* has received a real or fancied hurt; he is envious, because *he would not have any rise higher or prosper more than him-*

GOD CLAIMS THE HEART.

This makes man indifferent to his fellow-creatures' good. While self does not suffer, it is a trifle to him that others do. This evil root produces slothfulness and inactivity. Even the professors of religion sit down contented with enjoying the blessings of the gospel, and careless of a perishing world; *they* (at least they think so) feel no want. Selfishness produces deceit, and treachery, and dishonesty. These are used to advance its ends. Discontent is its offspring. When thinking highly of what himself is or deserves, man becomes dissatisfied with the conduct of his God towards him. Wars, murders, the single murders of villains, the *wholesale* murders committed by hostile nations, or by heroes, are to be ascribed to this. Had man been a stranger to this corruption, he loved his God and his fellow-creatures, the earth would never have been dyed with human blood. Could this radical corruption of human nature enter heaven, heaven would become a scene of discord and confusion. The inhabitants would each have an interest of his own, distinct from that of all around him, and opposed to the glory

your powers, and all your faculties, all you have, and all you are. With your whole heart you are bound to love him. Our days are to be spent for him, our property considered as his. You are called upon to offer your body a living sacrifice to the Lord; to esteem yourself no more your own, but his; your feet to move at his bidding, your hands to labour for his honour, your tongue to speak to his glory, and your body with all its powers to be holy and devoted to the Lord. So that even in the common actions of life, God may be regarded and honoured by you. Nor is this a mere matter of choice, which may be chosen as a higher good, but neglected without any considerable harm. It is the very object the gospel is designed to promote. There is no piety without devotedness to God. All professions of religion without this are as sounding brass or a tinkling cymbal. Nay, worse. The unconscious brass, when it emits a sound, is not false and hypocritical, but professions of religion, without devotedness to God, are glaring hypocrisy.

O, Reader, is such the life you lead? Has God your heart? Can you, with the Psalmist, exclaim, My heart is fixed, O God, my heart is fixed?—fixed on thee, on Jesus, and on heaven;—fixed on consecrating to thee my faculties and powers; and though my flesh and heart must fail, yet would I consecrate to thee all the nobler powers of my immortal mind, and in life and in death aspire to thee, my God, and my portion for ever.

The view thus offered of the nature and necessity of devotedness to God, is further confirmed and illustrated by those numerous passages, which represent the Christian as a child of God.^d Surely from the children of such a Father, all this consecration of their whole selves to him is demanded. The affection of parents claims much, but the love of God claims more; and shall it be thought wicked ingratitude not to requite theirs with obedience and affection, and does not his demand much more devoted obedience, much more fervent affection? How high, how noble a character is that of a child of God! Ask an angel what is his highest honour, his noblest joy, and he might reply, It is that I am a child of God. Is this yours also, and should not an angel's dispositions be cherished in your heart? How supreme is their devotedness to

(d) 1 John iii. 2. Gal. v. 26. Rom. viii. 16.

God! how fervent their love! how rapturous their delight! They have no will but his, no pleasure but in pleasing him. Why should they be more devoted to God than you! Are not you his child, his son, or daughter? they are no more. Are not you his child, ransomed by the blood of his Son? they are not so much. In this your nearness and dearness to him excels even theirs; and can you feel this, and not devote to him your body and your soul?

§ 11. True devotedness to God is connected with deep self-abasement and child-like affection. It is not the devotedness of a servant, who employs his powers for his master, merely on account of the wages he expects to earn; it is the devotedness of a ransomed criminal, who consecrates to the friend that redeemed him the life his kindness has prolonged. It is the devotedness of a penitent prodigal, when restored by undeserved compassion to his father's house and bosom. He serves God, not for the benefits he wishes to acquire, but for the mercies he has received.

Think of the case of a condemned criminal. Having violated his country's laws, he is justly doomed to death. His

my blood thanks you, for you have had compassion on every drop of it.' He wished he might before he died have leave to kneel at the threshold of my door, to pray for me and mine; which indeed he did on his knees, in the most earnest manner, when he was taken out to be executed. 'You,' said he, 'are my redeemer in one sense (a poor impotent redeemer!) and you have a right to me. If I live, I am your property, and I will be a faithful subject.'"

"May I not learn from it gratitude to him, who hath redeemed and delivered me? How eagerly did he receive the news of a reprieve for a few days! How tenderly did he express his gratitude; that he should be mine; that I might do what I pleased with him; that I had bought him! Spoke of the delight with which he should see and serve me; that he would come once a year from one end of the kingdom to the other, to see and thank me, and should be glad never to go out of my sight! O, why do not our hearts overflow with such sentiments on an occasion infinitely greater! We are all dead men. Execution would soon have been done upon us: but Christ has redeemed us to God by his blood.' We are not merely reprieved, but pardoned; not merely pardoned, but adopted; made heirs of eternal glory, and near the borders of it. In consequence of all this, we are not our own, but 'bought with a price. May we glorify God in our bodies and spirits, which are his!'"

Every child of God was once as surely a condemned wretch as was the poor Irish criminal. And condemned to a more dreadful death, the death that never dies. What then should be the language of the Christian, who views himself and his condition rightly. "Father, nothing that I have is mine; for I have forfeited all, and lost myself. Behind me were years of sin, before me the gloom of eternal night. I lay a helpless, ruined wretch, justly condemned to death and hell; and as able to pluck the sun from the firmament, as to blot out my crimes, or to set aside the sentence of deserved condemnation. I had lost thy favour. I had no claim upon the smallest blessing; nothing was mine but guilt; nothing awaited me but perdition; without one gleam of hope, I was hastening to eternal night. Then didst thou interpose. Then did thy Son bleed and atone for me; and now I live. Thou hast given me *more than a reprieve*, a gracious pardon. I live, pardoned,

God! **He** saved; but whose am I? not my own. The blessing **He** bestowed on me when I had lost my all, bought all I **was**, and all I am. Thou art my Redeemer, and **thou** art **right** to me. Thou hast had compassion on my body and soul. I am thy property, and while I live would live

How important is such a life! how different the feeling of a heart, actuated by such principles, from the indulgent, who having never known themselves utterly damned, hope to please God by their defective moral conduct. How different in its design as well as in its governing principle. Let the mere moralist, or the fashionable worldly man, utter his sentiments, and he might say, "I trust the goodness of my character, and the goodness of my heart and actions, will obtain me the favour of my Maker." Let him, who has the principles above displayed, explain the design of his conduct, and he would say, "I have no such expectation; my deluded fellow-sinner describes; I have deserved that direful doom, I know I cannot merit heaven. All that I do, and all I ever can do, for God (who would do all I can,) is but a poor imperfect offering of gratitude and love to him for saving me. It is not a vain hope which I hope to earn his favour, but it is his right because he, as it were, bought my body and my soul; he redeemed me from the pit of destruction, by the blood of his Son.

A life of devotedness to God is not generally with retirement, and withdrawal from the duties of the present world. Some avocations indeed are of such a nature that religion absolutely forbids them, but with respect to those that are lawful and needful, the followers of Christ are directed to be "not slothful in business,"* as well as diligent in spirit, serving the Lord. Religion does not set aside common avocations of life, but, while it allows or encourages employments, it sanctifies the motives, that are to govern their performance, and says, Do this not with the view of worldly glory, but do all to the glory of God. In thy industry, let thy diligence, reflect honour on God, and furnish thee with additional means for the promotion of the honour of God. Seek health, that God may be glorified in thy improvement of its blessings. Labour for food

may be glorified in the life that food supports. Let ho-
 to the Lord be as much inscribed on all the engagements
 life, as upon the hours devoted to religious acts.

§ 12. Another feature in a life of devotedness to God will
 be, a prevailing concern to pass life as in his sight. That we
 are so, all but atheists acknowledge, but most forget. That
 he is so, the Christian desires to remember, and more and
 more impressively to feel.

In public, or in private, in blazing day, or midnight dark-
 ness, still acknowledge, Thou, O God, seest me. In the season
 of business, and in the hour of prayer, in the house of worship,
 or by your own fire-side, still God sees you. He hears every
 word, he observes every action, and watches every thought.
 Alas! how much practical atheism have even his children to
 deplore! for how much are these truths forgotten! He sees
 thee in the day of pain, and knows thy every secret sorrow.
 He sees thee in thy cheerful hours, and knows how those
 hours are spent. Were an apostle or an angel always with
 you, how would you watch your actions, and your words!
 But an infinitely greater is always near you! Were you to
 spend a few years immediately in the presence of God, how
 would you live? God is as intimately acquainted with you,
 and all you do, say, and think, and are, as he could possibly
 be then. Act therefore as in his sight. Often think, "Should
 I live as I do, if I saw my God? Should I do these actions,
 utter these words, should I indulge these thoughts, if I beheld
 him, who now beholds me?"

Imitate the Lord Jesus Christ. In his holy life, devoted-
 ness to God shone with its brightest lustre. He represented it
 as his meat, his very support, to do his heavenly Father's will.
 When after a fatiguing journey, his disciples entreated him to
 partake of refreshment, he replied, "I have meat to eat that
 ye know not of. My meat is to do the will of him that sent
 me, and to finish his work." He laboured and suffered for
 the honour of God. He ascribed to his heavenly Father his
 actions, his doctrines, and his success. He waited on him in
 his temple, or sought the solitude of deserts, to spend whole
 nights in fervent devotion. In life, he was all activity and
 zeal for his heavenly Father's honour; and in sufferings and
 death, all submission and resignation to his heavenly Father's

will : and he left us his example that we should steps.

§ 13. Perhaps you think the devotedness to God upon you, is far superior to that which numbers of religion manifest. Be it so. Numbers deceive and have a name to live while they are dead. None of whose sincerity some hope may be entertained, give cause for many a fear that, when weighed in the balance they will be found wanting. You would not wish to belong to either of these classes. You will wish for that, when proved by death and eternity, shall appear in the right kind. Think not then that you are entreating yourself too entirely to God. He claims you for his sake. "I beseech you, by the mercies of God, to offer up your body a living sacrifice, holy, and acceptable, which is your reasonable service." ⁸ O think of the God who made you what you are. You might have been a brute but he has blessed you with a human form, and a rational soul. You enjoy the use of reason. It is his gift. You might have been an idiot or a maniac. Do you possess sight, speech, sight? Can you taste, feel, smell? I have blessed you with these powers; you might have been deaf, dumb, and blind, unable to smell, or feel, or hear. Perhaps you were born to the enjoyment of wealth and power, but for his goodness, you might have been




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dark and cheerless agonies ; your assured prospects into nity, with their cold and heart-sickening theories ; and v theme have you for gratitude ! what an argument for pr Who hath made you to differ ? Why were you not b Dahomy, or Hindostan, or Ceylon, and trained to worsh tiger, or juggernaut, or devils ? Some compute six hu millions of pagans to exist on earth. You might have one ; but God fixed your lot where the gospel spreads a ing day. There are perhaps one hundred millions of p the greater part of them as ignorant of religion as the he themselves. Why are you not one ? Why were you no where, instead of learning to adore God and the LamI would have been taught to worship "silver saviours and of gold !" and, nursed up in superstition and vice, have the slave of sin, believing that you could purchase of ant a pardon for your crimes ? Have you a Bible ? Millions saw its holy pages. For perhaps a thousand millions c man beings but twenty-five millions of Bibles are supp have been printed. Why have you that precious book bestowed it on you.

But I address you as a partaker of still greater m Turn your eyes from earth to heaven. Think of God mending his love toward us, in that while we were y ners Christ died for us. Think that he who kindled a

star of light, assumed your nature, and suffered in your



of mercy brought me here? me, once so vain, so gay, so thoughtless of all real good;—me, once so dissipated, so worldly;—me, once stained with ten thousand sins;—me, for whom the pit of destruction yawned, and whom devils expected as their prey! God, that awful venerable name! God brought me here; and never, never should I have seen this abode of peace, but for his saving love. O my friend, are these rich mercies in possession, these richer in prospect, all the gift of that much injured, yet still benevolent, Being, God, and can he expect, or can you be willing to offer, less in return than all you have and are! Is it much to devote that little to him, who gives so much? Has he given you life and health, a thousand comforts, and more than doubled all in giving Christ, and will you not devote to him yourself and your all? Will he give you heaven, and is it much to devote to him a span of time on earth! O rather, pray, Merciful God! little, far too little, is the most I ever can devote to thee; and let me not make that little less, by offering a heart but half set on thee, and life but half devoted to thee! O rather, whatever other professors of thy gospel do, enable me to offer to thee all I have, and all I am, an unworthy and insignificant, yet a living, and, through Jesus Christ, an acceptable sacrifice!

§ 15. As one motive more for devotedness to God, remember that they who live most to God, live most to their own true welfare; and they who live to themselves, live to ruin. On this subject a pious writer observes,

“The fact is, no man will have been found too cunning for God. Men, all men, will be for ever and ever what they were through life. Not a grain of the seed sown in time, but what will bear in time and through eternity its own fruit. The tree which thou plantest, O immortal, of its fruit shalt thou partake for ever. By the merits of Christ believers will attain to life eternal, but the history of that life eternal will bear the motto, ‘Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he reap.’ ‘One star differeth from another star in glory, so also is the resurrection of the dead.’ And thus a life of selfishness invariably ends in disappointment in some shape or other. There is an inseparable, an eternal, connexion between actions and their fruit, and no wit or cunning of men can dissolve it. ‘He that soweth sparingly shall reap also sparingly, and he that soweth bountifully shall reap also bountifully.’ ‘He that soweth to

the flesh, shall of the flesh reap corruption, but he that sows to the Spirit, shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting.'


"But he who has lived to himself, shall 'arise to shame and everlasting contempt.' I set before thee a heavenly and a glorious career of Christian benevolence; and my Son should have been perfected in thy weakness. But thou preferredst a partial view of thy own interests, and thou livedst to thyself. Absorbed in secular engagements, thou rearedst a noble mansion; thou elevatedst thy family to the highest dignities, and the name of thy house has survived the ravages of centuries. But see, the world is on fire! Behold, a new earth and a new heaven! What share hast thou in this new creation? Is there one soul on these thrones which thou instrumentally raised thither? Is there one scene to the beauty of which thou hast contributed? None. All thy labours, thy projects, have perished in the great conflagration; thou art left alone, since all earthly connexions are dissolved for ever to reflect on the inexpressible folly and turpitude of a life which has been consumed on a base and fruitless effort to make self the object of adoration and service, while the world and all the creatures have been made to 'serve with thy God, infatuated wretch, eternity is before thee. a godless moment, a miserable reptile for ever. Hadst thou lived to God, I had made thee a son and an heir of God. Thou hast lived to thyself: thyself in ruins shall be to thee the only ob-

cares or troubles. What is the world to one who has to do with God? What are its pleasures or its pains to one who hopes ere long to be with God? What all the cares that agitate its followers, to one that knows he has but a moment here and eternity there? What is the world, what is thy country, what all thy friends to thee, compared with God? This world is not thy world. This country is not thy country. These friends, unless they too are the children of God, are not thy lasting friends; but heaven is thy country, and God is thy Friend and thy Father for ever.

And who is he that is thus engaged as thy friend? The God who is love. Love is his brightest glory. For scores of ages has he been showering down innumerable blessings on this ungrateful world; for he *is love*. The meanest insect is not beneath his care. A sparrow does not die without him, and the fowls of the heaven are fed, because GOD IS LOVE. But in eternity the sun of his love sheds its brightest beams without one darkening cloud. Joy is diffused through all the immense regions of heaven, because GOD IS LOVE. Eternal day smiles on its peaceful mansions, for God is there, and GOD IS LOVE. Myriads of happy spirits exult there in unsullied holiness, unmingled happiness, and never-fading glory, for God is their friend, and GOD IS LOVE. He pours the tide of joy through their abodes, he lights up their eternal day, all they are, and all they have, all that heaven can furnish and eternal life bestow, all is the gift of God, for GOD IS LOVE. And is this God, thy God! then rejoice. The friend of angels is thy Friend and Father; and GOD IS LOVE TO THEE. What are all thy friends, and all their love compared with his? His love that reaches through earth and heaven! His love that supplies a sparrow's wants, and crowns with glory every angel's head! His love that extends through time, and stretches to eternity! His love to thee, more boundless than that to the angels that bow at his feet! For, for thee, a rebel and a worm, he gave his Son. O wonder and adore! This God, thy God! O bow at his feet! Abhor thyself for having ever offended him, and triumph in his love. Father of heaven, art thou my Father, and shall I not delight in thee? Giver of eternal life, art thou my life, and shall I not live to thee? God of angels, art thou my God, and a kinder God to me than even to them, and shall I not love thee, and yield

all my powers to thee? and wish to love thee with an a fire? Light of eternity, art thou my light, and shall listen to thee, and count all wisdom folly, but the wisdom thy word? all learning ignorance, except the truth thy book unfolds? Thou art love. O patient love! I have injured thee, yet thou art kind to me. How are my sins, of a hellish dye! How have I acted, even a devil's part sinning against infinite goodness! and grieving infinite Yes, my young friend, these mingled feelings of exultation in God, and deep self-detestation, well become us when in the love of God. Look but at his everlasting love there thou wilt find a sufficient portion to gladden all thy and without a sigh, thou wilt leave riches, and honour pleasures, and fame, to their possessors, whilst thou canst GOD IS LOVE, and God is mine.

§ 17. Reflect further: He, thy God, is ever with Friends may be absent, he is always near. He sees thy he hears thy prayers, he beholds the pantings of thy and the desires of thy soul after more of his presence, his ness, and his love. He is by when thou art praying in s and he goes with thee in thy lonely walks. He give strength for the labours of the day; and watches over through the darkness of the night. Perhaps thy house is the great ones of the earth might scorn to enter thy dwelling, or come under thy lowly roof, but thy God is



! However lowly, however despised on earth, as his thy name is written in the book of life, and stands en- in the records of heaven. While God is thine, though mayst have little here, thou hast much there. On but just a humble shelter, in which to lay thy head ; but even *an inheritance, incorruptible and undefiled, and cannot fade away.* No riches here, but endless riches and it matters not if thou art poor on earth, whilst thou art rich in heaven.

Thou art perhaps thou hast few friends, yet canst thou want a friend, God is thy friend ? He is more to thee than the whole world ; and his friendship of infinitely more value than that of the inhabitants of earth or heaven besides. Thou art as a moth, but *the eternal God is thy refuge, the ever-lasting arms* support thee. Thou art beset by foes and dangers, but the infinite God is thy shield ; thou art a dying creature, but the immortal God is thy life and thy portion.

Thou art perhaps God has given thee more of the comforts and mercies of this dying world ; yet it is a dying world, and all is passing round thee. Rejoice then not in fading transitory things, but in thy God. God is thy God for ever, but nothing here is for ever. The tender parents, or beloved and loving friends, whose kindness and affection give life its chief charm, who sadden the very heart, are not in this shadowy world to remain thy friends for ever. The bloom of youth, the strength of manhood, the vigour and the joy of health, will not be thine for ever. The possessions and comforts of this life cannot remain thine. This is not the eternal world. All is shadow and all is change and deception. Thy friends must quickly leave thee, but thy God will never die. *He inhabiteth eternity.* Health must be changed to sickness, thy ease to pain, thy life to death. Thy taper will expire ; thy sun will set ; all that thou hast rapacious death will tear away. Rejoice not then in fading things, but if God is thine, glory in thy God, who is above the reach of change ; thy God, the everlasting God of the immortal soul. And he thy friend, thy portion, thy God, though the span of life, will be thine through eternal years. The sun that cheers thee with its light and warmth, must one day shine upon thy grave ; but God, thy glory, will then shine with all the beams of heavenly love upon thy soul. The sun itself must ere long expire, but God shall be thy

everlasting light. The world on which thou art now, must perish like a bubble, that bursts and but God, who leads thee here, will be thy God in those regions, where dwell the nations of the saved.

There will he make thee rich, when all except are poor ; and happy, when all but they are wretched. He will his love diffuse joy unutterable, far more exalted than any joy of earth, and eternal through thy soul. There, " violence shall not be heard in thy land, wasting nor destruction withers ; but thou shalt call thy walls Salvation, and thy gates Praise. The sun shall be no more thy light by day, for brightness shall the moon give light unto thee, and the Lord shall be unto thee an everlasting light, and thy glory. Thy sun shall no more go down ; and thy moon withdraw itself : for the Lord shall be thy everlasting light, and the days of thy mourning shall be ended."

§ 18. The views the Scriptures afford you of God, will lead you to bind that volume to your heart. How different is the God of the Bible, from that motley train of polytheism, which heathenism has produced ! weak and feeble, and sinful gods. How different too is Jehovah from those gods, which infidels, who admit any god, describe as ; gods who see with unconcern the vicious conduct of men, who are divested of holiness and justice, and his brighte



CHAPTER II.

THE NATURE AND LOVE OF THE LORD JESUS CHRIST; AND ON LOVE TO HIM.

THERE are few more impressive proofs of human depravity, than the general indifference of mankind to acts of everlasting moment; and the contempt of the world for the happy few who are warmly devoted to the Saviour. Zeal in other pursuits is admired, zeal for the gospel despised. Yet will real Christians triumph in their Redeemer's name, and most admire and most love those grand glories of the gospel, for attachment to which, the world most ridicules and despises them. No name is so dear to them as that name which shall endure for ever; no part of Christianity so prized as that which is to the Jew a stumbling-block, and to the wise man a world foolishness. The glowing fervours of a poet's language express the sober feeling of their hearts.

"Religion, thou the soul of happiness,
And groaning Calvary, of thee! there shine
The noblest truths; there strongest motives sting;
There sacred violence assaults the soul;
There nothing but compulsion is forborne.

Thou, my all!
My theme! my inspiration! and my crown!
My strength in age! my rise in low estate!
My soul's ambition, pleasure, wealth! my world!
My light in darkness! and my life in death!
My boast through time! bliss through eternity!
Eternity too short to speak thy praise,
Or fathom thy profound of love to man!
To man of men the nearest, ev'n to me!
My sacrifice! my God! What things are these?
Talk they of morals? O thou bleeding Love!
Thou Maker of new morals to mankind!
The grand morality is love to thee!"

Such regard to the Saviour can exist only where exalted views are entertained of his person and offices.

2. In taking a view of a few of the leading arguments which prove that Jesus Christ is God * over all, blessed for ever,

inquiries on this subject are not speculative. Correct views upon it affect the heart, and the life. "If Jesus Christ is God, then we perceive how vast was the debt, how great are our obligations to him, for taking human nature to save the world! How inestimable that heaven to which he would raise us! How the depravity, guilt, and misery, from which the Son of God could rescue

we may observe that the Scriptures repeatedly assert that God, and give him the names and titles of God.

us, only by taking human nature and dying for sin! But if we could see Jesus Christ as merely a man, we should see no more in the love of Christ than in the love of Paul; and should discern nothing in what that could peculiarly display the depth of our sinfulness, the worth of the love of God, or the value of heaven." Thus this momentous question all the branches of religion and religious truth.

Inquiry on this subject is more important in the present than in former ages. Open infidelity has received a check. Its atrocities in France brought into disgrace. It therefore in many cases adopts the specious and more insidious form of Unitarianism. It sets aside the infinite evil of vice, the rigour of the divine law, and the lost and undone condition of man, moves, or tries to remove, the fear of future punishment; tells its disciples there is no such being as Satan, and no such place as hell; or if there is, but a purgatory, and when purified by fire, as Priestley taught upon his bed, they will rise to heaven. Thus taught, they need not be very so about eternity, nor much concerned about strict morality; for profligate, the pious and the atheist, will find all well at last. They may scenes of dissipation; frequent the mask, the ball, and the dissolute play love the world and the things of the world; reject a great part of the word; treat Paul as an inconclusive reasoner, and Jesus as a peccable man. What is this system but infidelity under another name?

Perhaps these remarks may be thought uncandid and severe. Let them therefore be permitted to add, that to Unitarians, as men, and fellow-creatures, he feels no dislike, but cordial benevolence. Nor are the above remarks designed to attack them as if all put on Unitarianism as a mask to cover infidelity. Some no doubt do, but many adopt it through the pride of reason, or the influence of education. It is the system the writer attacks; for he sees that it is any part of real candour to describe black as white, or white as black, or to represent the difference as small between them. The two systems of evangelical and modern Unitarian faith are removed as far asunder as east and the west. If the former is Christianity, the latter is disguised, in many instances, *not designed*, infidelity. This system attacks, with violence, the divinity and atonement of Jesus. Whilst therefore in many instances Unitarianism endeavours to beguile the young and unsuspecting, it is dangerous for them to be able to give a reason of their professed belief in the divinity of Jesus, and of the hope which rests upon him as God over all. Let them

1 the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with
and the Word was God." * That Jesus Christ is here

ey will last their hour ; but remember the rough hand of death will
ou and them to destruction together ; and heaven will pour down eter-
ings on the babe in Christ, whom you despise, when notwithstanding
fancied worth and wisdom, it has no blessing left for you. It is ac-
ged that this is a subject replete with mystery. The Scriptures plainly
hat there is but one God. On their authority this is to be believed.
riptures, as plainly as they assert that the Father is God over all,
at Jesus Christ is God, and represent the Holy Spirit as God. How
er, Son, and Holy Ghost, are in some respects distinct, and yet but
it is not for man to explain. But this forms no objection to its truth.
there that is not mysterious to man ? Let some philosopher, that denies
ity of Jesus, because he cannot comprehend how the Father and the
be but one God, tell us of some object in nature that is not mysterious,
e rejects the Scriptures for describing a mysterious God.

le of grass contains mysteries that no philosopher can unravel. Should
re of the Creator of the universe be less mysterious than that of a blade
? Look at yourself ; you are a world of mysteries. What is your body ?
not answer. What is your spirit ? You are still more unable to re-
can no more comprehend your own spirit, than you can the God of

How does spirit act on matter ? your limbs move at the direction of
nd ? Still you can give no satisfactory statement. You are engulfed in

. Does your nature consist of a body and a spirit merely, or do a
an animal soul, and an immortal spirit, unite in you ? Even this you
answer, nor tell whether you yourself are compounded of two, or of
inct parts or principles. Let man then comprehend and explain his
are before he endeavours to unfold that of the infinite God ; then it will
enough to listen to the Unitarian's arguments against the divinity of
ecause it is a subject fraught with mystery.

quent passage from Skelton, a writer comparatively little known, shall
e this long note.

to the doctrine of the Trinity, it is even more amazing than that of the
tion : yet, prodigious and amazing as it is, such is the incomprehen-
ure of God, that I believe it will be extremely difficult to prove from
that it cannot possibly be true. The point seems to be above the reach
n, and too wide for the grasp of human understanding. However, I
en observed, in thinking of the eternity and immensity of God ; of his
ag from eternity to the production of the first creature, without a world
n, or a single being to manifest his goodness to ; of the motives that
ed him to call his creatures into being ; why they operated when they
not before ; of his raising up intelligent beings, whose wickedness and
e foresaw ; of the state in which his relative attributes, justice, bounty,
rcy, remained through an immense space of duration, before he had
d any creatures, to exercise them towards ; in thinking, I say, of these
nable matters, and of his raising so many myriads of spirits, and such
us masses of matter, out of nothing ; I am lost, and astonished, as much
e contemplation of the Trinity. There is but a small distance in the
being between a *mite* and *me* ; although that which is food to me is a
him, we mess, notwithstanding, on the same cheese, breathe the same
are generated much in the same manner ; yet how incomprehensible
nature and actions be to him ! He can take but a small part of me with
at once ; and it would be the work of his life to make the tour of my
can eat up his world, immense as it seems to him, at a few meals : he,
mle ! cannot tell but there may be a thousand distinct beings, or per-
ch as mites can conceive in so great a being. By this comparison I
self vastly capacious and comprehensive ; and begin to swell still bigger
ide and high thoughts ; but the moment I lift up my mind to God, be-
hom and me there is an infinite distance, then I myself become a mite,
thing infinitely less ; I shrink almost into nothing. I can follow him
or two steps in his lowest and plainest works, till all becomes mystery,
ter of amazement, to me. How, then, shall I comprehend himself ?
all I understand his nature ? or account for his actions ? In these, he
e a boundless scheme of things, whereas I can see but an inch before

(a) John i. 1.

spoken of is clear from a following verse. "And he was made flesh and dwelt among us." "They shall call his name Immanuel, that is, God with us." ^b Jesus Christ before is God with us. "Christ came, who is ever blessed for ever." ^c

The Father is represented as addressing Christ "Unto the Son he saith, Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever." ^d While the Father pronounces him to be possessed of an everlasting dominion, shall we hesitate to acknowledge him divine?

Christ is called the *true* God. "We are in his Father, and in his Son Jesus Christ; this (or he) is the true and eternal life." ^e That the person here called the Son is Jesus Christ, is evident not merely from the nature of the passage, but from chap i. ver. 2. of this epistle. Christ is called "that eternal life that was with the Father and was manifested to us."

Christ is called the *great* God, and the *mighty*. "Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ." ^f It is not the Father, who will appear as the Judge of the world, consequently as the appearing of Christ is that of God and our Saviour, Jesus Christ is here declared to be great God.

"Unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given."



incommunicable name. He says, "I am Jehovah;* that is my name, and my glory will I not give to another."^a This name, peculiar title of the eternal God, is freely applied to Christ. This is his name whereby he shall be called, The Lord (Jehovah) our righteousness."ⁱ

The voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye way of the Lord (Jehovah), make straight in the desert a way for our God."^k In each of the four gospels, it is noted that the person here spoken of, as a voice crying in wilderness, was John the Baptist.^l Since John came as a forerunner, to prepare the way for Jesus Christ, he, in this prophesied prophecy, is called Jehovah. This view of the name is further confirmed by the language of the angel Gabriel to Zacharias. "Many of the children of Israel shall turn to the Lord their God; and he shall go before him (the Lord their God) in the spirit and power of Elias."^m

That Jesus is called Jehovah is further evident from observing that the glory of the Lord (Jehovah), which Isaiah saw, is the glory of Christ. "In the year that king Uzziah died, I saw also the Lord (Jehovah), sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up, and his train filled the temple. Above it stood the Seraphim; and one cried to another and said, Holy, holy, holy is the Lord (Jehovah) of hosts! the whole earth is full of his glory."ⁿ St. John refers to the 9th and 10th verses of this chapter, (John xii. 40.) and then, speaking of Christ, says, *These things said Isaiah, when he saw his glory, and spake of him.* It was the glory of the Lord of hosts, and of no other person, which the prophet saw; and yet St. John says, that he then saw the glory of Christ, and spake of him. Consequently Christ is the Lord (Jehovah) of hosts.

Thus in the plain, unperturbed language of Scripture, is Jesus Christ represented as God, as the true God, the great God, the mighty God, Jehovah, as God over all blessed for ever, and even as addressed as God by the Father. If, as the Unitarians assert, Christ were no more than man, how dark, confused, and unintelligible would that holy volume appear! Instead of being a sure guide, none would be more uncertain. Christ were but man, to worship him would be idolatry,

(a) Isa. xlii. 8. (i) Jer. xxiii. 6. (k) Isa. xl. 3.
 (l) John i. 23. Matt. iii. 3. Mark i. 2. Luke iii. 4. (m) Luke i. 16, 17.
 (n) Isa. vi. 3.

The English reader of the Scriptures may observe, that when the word *Jehovah* occurs, and is translated the Lord, it is printed in small capitals.

- 4 yet millions of the best and wisest of mankind have to worship him, by that very book, which says, "ke selves from idols."^o If Jesus Christ is not God, th writers have deceived millions, who wished to know t will ; have led them to pay divine honours to a me angel ; and thus drawn them into the enormous and crime of idolatry. Can you believe a system true w dently leads to this conclusion ?

§ 3. That Jesus Christ is God, is further proved possessing those divine excellences which dwell in n nature. He is eternal. Of himself he says, " I am and the last : " " These things saith the first and the was dead and is alive." ^p These words contain " the assertion that eternity past and to come belongs to hi he is the first none can have been before him ; if last, none can be after him." ^{*} Were he the eldest greatest of created beings, he would not be the first, would have been before him.

If it were possible to render these passages more de might be done by comparing them with some othe speak of Jehovah. " Thus saith Jehovah, I am the I am the last, and besides me there is no God." ⁿ " first, I also am the last, mine hand also hath laid t ations of the earth." ^r That existence from eternity nity which Jehovah claims to himself in these passa claims in the former.

§ 4. Christ is God, for he is the Creator of all thin



God." "O Jehovah, *thou* hast made heaven and earth."⁽¹⁾ "Where wast thou when I laid the foundations of the earth."⁽²⁾ "I am the Lord (Jehovah) that maketh all things; that stretcheth forth the heavens *alone*, that spreadeth abroad the earth *by myself*."⁽³⁾ "I have made the earth, and created man upon it; *I*, even *my hands*, have stretched out the heavens, and all their host have I commanded."⁽⁴⁾ Thus plainly Jehovah assume to himself the glory of creating the universe, and deny the claim of every inferior being, how exalted soever, to any participation in the honour of that stupendous work.

We may next observe, that that holy book which, in terms express, declares God to be author of the whole universe, in terms as express ascribes that work to Jesus Christ. "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God; all things were made by him, and without him was not any thing made that was made."⁽⁵⁾ Crism has laboured hard to wrest this passage from its obvious meaning, but after all it stands a steadfast witness to the fact, that Christ is the Creator of all things; strong as it appears in our translation, but still stronger in the original, "Without him was not made *a single thing* that was made." "By him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are on earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones or dominions, or principalities, or powers; all things were created by him, and for him: and he is before all things, and by him all things consist."⁽⁶⁾ The language in this passage is peculiarly powerful. The leading idea, that all things owe their existence to Christ, is repeated twice over—by him were all things created—all things were created by him. It is also asserted that he existed before them all; and that his power supports them all in being—by him all things consist.

It may properly be observed, that the language used here is altogether opposed to the idea of Jesus Christ's having acted as the Almighty's agent in producing the world; "He is before all things—Without him was not one single thing made." Can he be a creature who existed *before* all creatures?—Can he have been made without whom was not *one single thing made*?

(1) Heb. iii. 1.

(2) Isa. xlv. 24.

(3) 2 Kings xix. 15.

(4) Isa. xlv. 12.

(5) Col. i. 16, 17.

(6) Job xxxviii. 4, &c.

(7) John i. 1, 3.

The next testimony that shall be adduced markable by the circumstance of the very *sa* in the Old Testament ascribe creation to God the New Testament to attribute that work to Lord, in the beginning *hast* laid the foundation and the heavens are the work of thy hand perish, but thou remainest; and they all shall a garment; and as a vesture shalt thou for they shall be changed; but thou art the same shall not fail.”^a

The unavoidable conclusion is, that Jesus over all. These statements respecting creation a created being, would be perfectly contradicted by his own words, “I and my Father are perfectly true and consistent.

§ 5. It would occupy too much of this to pursue the subject very diffusely; however, sent a few more proofs, in a concise form, by column passages which undoubtedly refer to and in an opposite column passages which perfections as Jehovah possesses to Jesus Christ.

OMNISCIENCE.

GOD.

Thou, thou *only* knowest the hearts of all the children of men.^a The heart, “who can know it? I the Lord search the heart.”^b

CH
I am He who reins and the

These passages are peculiar. In one of them that God *ONLY* knows the heart. In the other that Christ searches the heart, but is he (thou) who searches the heart.

The Lord is a God of knowledge, by him are actions weighed.^c

I know thy
Jesus knew the

The Lord understandeth all the imaginations of the thoughts.^d

(a) Heb. i. 10—12. (a) 1 Kings viii. 30. (b) Jer. xvii. (c) 1 Sam. ii. 3. (c) 1 Chron. viii. 9. (d) Luke vi. 8. v. 22. ix. 47. Matt. ix. 4

OMNIPRESENCE.

GOD.

God is not far from every
one of us, for in him we live,
and move, and have our be-
ing.^h

CHRIST.

Where two or three are ga-
thered in my name, there am
I in the midst of them.ⁱ

Lo, I am with you always,
even to the end of the world.^j

IMMUTABILITY.

I am the Lord ; I change
not.^k

Jesus Christ the same yester-
day, to-day, and for ever.^l

PRESERVATION OF THE UNIVERSE.

Thou Preserver of men ;
Thou preservest man and
beast.^m

By Him (Christ) do all
things consist.ⁿ

THE END FOR WHICH ALL THINGS WERE CREATED.

The Lord hath made all
things for himself.^o

All things were created by
him and for him.^p

THE GOVERNMENT OF THE UNIVERSE.

God is the King of all the
earth.^q

He is Lord of all.^r

The Lord is King for ever
and ever.^r The blessed and
only Potentate, the King of
kings, and Lord of lords.^s

He hath on his vesture a
name written, King of kings,
and Lord of lords.^u The Lamb ;
He is Lord of lords, and King
of kings.^v

DIVINE WORSHIP.

Thou shalt worship the Lord
by God, and him only shalt
thou serve.^w

Let all the angels of heaven
worship him.^x

Thou shalt worship no other
God, for Jehovah is a jealous
God.^x

All men should honour the
Son, even as they honour the
Father.^y

Father, into thy hands I
commend my spirit.^y

Lord Jesus, receive my spi-
rit.^b

Stephen worshipped the Lord Jesus in his dying moments.^c
Paul worshipped him.^d Christians are described as his wor-

^k Acts xvii. 27. ⁽ⁱ⁾ Matt. xviii. 20. ^(j) Matt. xxviii. 20. ^(h) Mal. iii. 6.

^(l) Heb. xiii. 8. ^(m) Job vii. 20. ⁽ⁿ⁾ Ps. xxxvi. 6. ^(o) Ps. cxlv. 20.

^{a)} Col. i. 17. ^(p) Prov. xvi. 4. ^(q) Col. i. 17. ^(r) Ps. xlvii. 7.

^(s) Ps. x. 16. ^(t) 1 Tim. vi. 15. ^(u) Acts x. 36. ^(v) Rev. xix. 13-16.

^(w) Rev. xviii. 14. ^(x) Matt. iv. 10. ^(y) Exod. xxxiv. 14. ^(z) Luke xxiii. 46.

^(a) Heb. i. 6. ^(b) John v. 23. ^(c) Acts vii. 59. ^(d) Acts vii. 59, 60.

^(e) 2 Cor. xii. 8, 9.

shippers.* Saints and angels in heaven worship him.† This worship is similar to that which they pay to God himself.‡

§ 6. Now, as if placed in the presence of God, let me call upon you to give a faithful verdict on this great question—Is Jesus Christ God over all; or is he merely man? or at most an exalted creature? Can a man or an angel bear the exalted titles of God; God with us; God over all; the true God; the great God; the mighty God; Jehovah? Can a man or an angel be the Alpha and Omega, the first and the last; the Creator of all things visible and invisible? Can such a being be the Searcher of hearts; present in all places at the same moment, wherever two or three are gathered in his name? and this to the end of the world? Can a man or an angel be the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever? the Preserver and Sovereign of the universe? and the end for which all things were created? Could it be said of a man or an angel, that all should honour him, as they honour the infinite God? that even all the angels of heaven should worship him? To adopt the words of an able writer:

“Can a creature be *the brightness of the Father’s glory, and the express Image of his person; the Light of the world, the Propitiation for sin, the Saviour of mankind, or the Object of religious worship*? Can any religious man, on a death-bed, say, “*Gabriel, receive my spirit?*” or, “*Lay not the sin of my murderers to their charge?*” Can *Gabriel* give life, raise the dead, or bestow immortal life? Can he judge the world, reward the righteous and the wicked, or be the glory, light, and temple of heaven? What would be the impression, were a minister of the gospel to say, *I baptize thee in the name of the Father, and of Gabriel, and of the Holy Ghost?* or, *The grace of Gabriel, the love of God the Father, and the communion of the Holy Ghost, be with you all. Amen?* Would not these things beyond measure shock the minds of a Christian assembly, as the most palpable blasphemy? Was there ever a minister, even an Arian, or a Socinian, who could bring himself thus to speak in such an assembly? Would not this be, not merely comparing, or likening, one of the angels to Jehovah, but placing him on the same level? Yet these things are said of Christ.

(*) 1 Cor. i. 2.

(†) Rev. v. 8–13.

(‡) Rev. vii. 9, 10. Rev. iv. 10, 11.

"Why are they said of him, if his nature be like that of Gabriel? Why are they *seemingly* said? Was it not perfectly easy for the Omniscient God to have said, if he chose say it, *that Christ was a mere man, or a mere creature?* Did so to have said this, that it would not have been misunderstood even by the plainest man? Did he not understand language sufficiently? Has it not been said in such a manner, to be intelligible to all men, by *Arius, Socinus, Zuicker, Rice, Priestley, Belsham*, and many others? Did any man ever mistrust, that they have not said it? Was not Jehovah more interested to say it, if it is true, than they were? and so say it, as to be easily, generally, and certainly understood? Was he not more able? Did he not foresee all the doubts, difficulties, errors, misconstructions, and consequent sins and idolatries, if they have indeed been misconstructions and idolatries, arising from unhappy language used in the Scriptures? Have not the *prophets*, who *spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost*; have not the *apostles*, who *spake the things freely given to them of God, not in the words which man's wisdom taught, but which the Holy Ghost taught*; expressed the mind of God on this subject, and every other, in the very manner chosen by God himself? Has not his infinite faithfulness and mercy, then, sufficiently guarded every nearest mind against this erroneous sin?

"But if Christ be not the true God, the great body of Christians have, in every age of the church, wholly misunderstood the Scriptures concerning this most important doctrine, and mistaken, infinitely, the real character of their Saviour. Of course the Scriptures have been so written, as that the natural interpretation of them is a source of total and dreadful error; even of that, which they themselves denounce in terms of the highest reprobation; *viz.* idolatry. For the interpretation, which has been given them by the great body of Christians, in every age and country, in which they have existed, is beyond a controversy the natural interpretation. *That men, who first make a philosophical system of religion, and then endeavour to reconcile the Scriptures to it, should understand them falsely, cannot be wondered at; but that they should be falsely understood by the great body of mankind, who for their religion come to them only, and yet the way of holiness be still a highway, in which wayfaring men,*

though fools, shall not err is a position, which explained." *

In your progress through the world you may see objections started to the all-important truth on these pages. Bear in mind, however, that there are against which cunning men cannot start puzzles. One plain assertion of God's, on subjects known to do more to confirm your belief, than a thousand cavils, to shake your confidence. Some bring fictions against the being of God, others against the matter; some will argue that you have no soul, you have no body. Perhaps the sophistry of them may perplex you. Will you therefore believe you not rather scorn their fancied wisdom?

§ 7. That holy volume which thus clearly asserts the deity of Jesus Christ, also declares that he was truly man. The Holy Spirit, speaking by the apostles, unites in one passage, Phil. ii. 6. 8. the two views. The apostle speaks of the latter only. As man he was virgin;^h was the reputed son of a carpenter;ⁱ to his parents;^k increased in wisdom and stature;^l favour with God and with man;^m was himself crucified;ⁿ was wearied;^o hungered;^p thirsted;^q wept;^r was poor and destitute;^s was rejected of men, and reviled;^t was in an agony;^u was betrayed, judged,

The Lord himself also speaks of this subject: "I am the first and the last, I am he that liveth and was dead, and behold I am alive for evermore."^a It is only as God that he could assert, "I am the first, and the last." And it is only as man, that he could declare "I am he that liveth and was dead." The subject is wonderful, above the reach of our powers, but not of our praise.

§ 8. The Christian is represented as under the greatest obligations to the adorable Saviour, and as sensible of those obligations.

"While we were yet sinners, Christ died for us."^b "When we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son."^c "Who gave himself for our sins, to deliver us from the present evil world."^d "Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us."^e "Jesus, who delivered us from the wrath to come."^f "God hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ; he hath made us accepted in the Beloved. We have redemption through his blood; are made nigh by the blood of Christ; are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of God."^g "Being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ; and rejoice in hope of the glory of God. Being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him."^h "Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father; to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever."ⁱ "And they sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy, for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood, out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation. Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing."^k

With what union of heart and voice do the disciples of Jesus thus express their obligations to him! The grateful acknowledgments of earth become the theme of heaven; the song of praise begun by men below, is carried on by saints and angels in the realms above; and the Lamb that was slain is the boast and theme alike of earth and heaven. Christians

(a) Rev. i. 17, 18.

(b) Rom. v. 5, 7.

(c) Rom. v. 10.

(d) Gal. i. 4.

(e) Gal. iii. 13.

(f) 1 Thess. i. 10.

(g) Eph. i. 3-7.

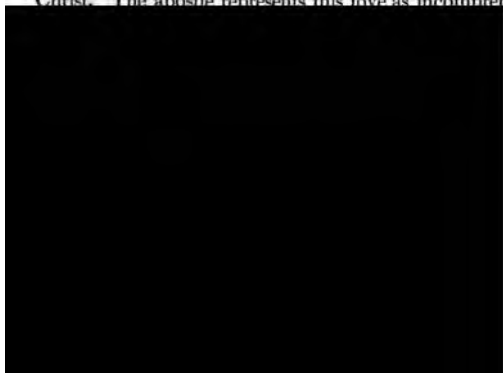
(h) Rom. v. 1, 2, 9.

(i) Rev. i. 5, 6.

(k) Rev. v. 9, 12.

are described not as anticipating, but as actually possessed of blessings of inestimable value. And all this multitude of blessings flows from no superiority or virtue of theirs, but the mere mercy of their God, but all is enjoyed through the blessed Jesus. Are they reconciled to God? it is through the death. Have they peace with God? he made it through the blood of his cross. Have they redemption? it is through the blood. Are they delivered from this present evil world? he gave himself for their deliverance. Have they received atonement? it is through the Lord Jesus. Are they forgiven? he is their propitiation. Are they delivered from the curse of the law? he was made a curse for them. Are they saved from the wrath to come? he died and delivered them. Are they rich? it is through his poverty. Are they accepted? it is in the Beloved. Are they complete? it is in him. Are they the hope? Jesus Christ is their hope. Are they revivified? he was made a sin-offering to reconcile us. Are they made nigh to God? it is by the blood of his atonement. Have they all spiritual blessings? they have them all. His atoning blood has done so much for them, as to justify the expression of a pious minister, "We are floating in the blood of the Deity."

§ 9. The subject of this chapter displays in the most interesting manner the love and condescending of the Lord Jesus Christ. The apostle represents this love as incomprehensible.



and years. He had peopled earth with myriads of immortal beings, and he had filled heaven with ranks of glorified angels. Seraphim and cherubim, thrones and dominions, principalities and powers, owed to him their being, their dignity and happiness. He had kindled up the seraph's fire, arrayed with immortal youth, and beauty, and glory, in angel's form.

In heaven these immortal multitudes enjoyed happiness with his smile. Below, all things appeared supported by him, and governed by his power. All was harmony and order, and all, excepting man, order and subjection below.

He reigned, blessing and blest: heaven his throne, the earth his kingdom. At length a time of inexpressible glory and astonishment arrived. From the heights of eternity he descends. The infinite enjoyments of heaven he leaves; forsakes the bosom of the Father; quits the regions of eternal day; and, in a way surpassing all thought and imagination, this divine Person unites himself to human nature; unites himself as to become literally man; and though rich becomes poor. And though *he thought it not robbery to be equal with God*, so connects himself with the nature of man, that *he made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men, and being found in fashion as a man, proving in his career of humiliation, he humbled himself and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.*^m In one wondrous person God and man are united. When he had thus taken human nature, this divine Person dwells more than thirty tedious years below. He is wearied with labour. The sun scorches him by day; and the cold chills him by night. Friends forsake him, and enemies murmur. He stoops to all. What a succession of wonders! What unequalled love! What condescension is here! And he is displayed for creatures, meaner, compared with him, than an archangel! Creatures, whose devotion could not have taken one ray from the sun of his glory, nor one drop from the ocean of his joy. Creatures, whose very world he could have destroyed by a word, as easily as a moth is crushed by a human hand; and have gathered them, and sin, and misery together, into everlasting

^m (m) Phil. ii. 6-9

nothingness and oblivion. But, with love unparalleled, he descends to this dark, polluted world ; and lives and dies for deceived, guilty, and wretched man. O love divine ! where are thy limits ? Great God ! beyond the sight of mortals and of angels ! The stupendous sun, the brilliant moon, the amazing stars, the extended firmament ; these have their bounds, but that love has none. It extends,

“ Beyond the flaming bounds of space and time.”

It reaches from,

“ The living throne, the sapphire blaze,
“ Where angels tremble as they gaze,”

to man's humblest habitation.

Lift up your eyes and behold this vast world, the product of his power ! See its continents and its oceans extending for thousands of miles ; those continents may be measured, but not his love, who, though God, became man, for man to die. Sooner would those unfathomable oceans be fathomed, than the depths of his compassion. Lift up your eyes to the heavens ! Survey the countless glories of the starry firmament, all its fixed or “ moving worlds of light !” Let your thoughts rove from star to star ! How great is he who formed them all ! How glorious he who has bid them shine with undiminished splendour through six thousand years ! and to whom they are mean as a speck of flying dust ! Yet he who hung out those brilliant fires, stooped from his amazing heights of bliss and majesty to assume mortal flesh, and appear a feeble infant, and a suffering man. Far sooner should you measure their immeasurable distances, and count their countless numbers, than tell the vastness of his love, and the blessings it bestows.

The sun is darkness, compared with his superior glory who hung it in the heavens, and yet he humbled himself to the dark abodes of misery and death for guilty man. O ! when you gaze upon the blue expanse, or when the solemn stillness of night banishes from your mind the thoughts of a vain, departing world ; when you behold the midnight sky, and mark the thousands of its glowing fires ; then think, that he who fixed them there once hung on Calvary for you, that you might shine a star, a sun, in heaven, when all those stars shall shine no more. Think that he was once mean and dishonoured, stained with blood, and blue with blows, that you

night have a treasure greater than a thousand worlds united, and infinitely more lasting than the countless lights which illuminate the firmament. Amazing love !

But vain is language, and vain is thought, it cannot grasp his love, nor by all the powers of imagination reach it, much less by words express it ! And vain is time. Its ages, were they as numerous as the drops of winter rain, would not suffice to unfold all the wonders of this mysterious wonder ! nor to declare the heights, and depths, and lengths, and breadths of this myterious love ! Were "all the love of all the men that ever were, or shall be on the earth and all the love of all the angels in heaven, united in one heart, it would be a cold heart to that which was pierced with the soldier's spear."* Holy Jesus, thy creatures can but dishonour thy love, when speaking of it. But come, ingulf me in it ! Come, overwhelm my sinking, rising soul, by the amazing view ; at least, so far overwhelm it, that I may speak, and think, and act, and live, and love for thee !

§ 10. While the Scriptures represent the love of Christ and the obligations of the Christian as so great, they furnish an important view of the Christian character, by declaring that an intimate connexion subsists between the eternal Saviour and his blood-bought flock.^a To describe this union, ideas are borrowed from those unions in the present world that are of the most close and binding nature. Is the tie of marriage a strong, indissoluble tie ? the believer is described as married to the Lord Jesus. Is the connexion between parent and child most affectionate and lasting ? the Christian is represented as the child of the Saviour. Is the relation between brethren most dear and intimate ? Jesus owns his followers as his brethren. Are the vine and its branches, the body and its members, but one ? Jesus is the vine, and his disciples the branches ; he is the head of the body, and his disciples the members. How dear, how close, how inestimable is that connexion with the adorable Saviour, which such language is used to describe ! But on this occasion these passages are adduced chiefly as descriptive of the Christian character. In that view glance at them again. Does marriage express a union of affection and interests ? the sincere Christian cherishes such affection, and

(a) Rom. vii. 4. 1 Cor. iii. 23. John xx. 17. Matt. xii. 50. John xv. 1. Eph. i. 23. 2 Cor. vi. 15. Eph. iv. 16. v. 29. 30.

* Maclaurin.

esteems his Lord's interests his own. Does a worthy render filial love and dutiful obedience to a tender parent who know the Saviour's grace render him such love and such obedience. Do brethren, united in heart, unite in desires and pursuits? the Christian, honoured with the title of a brother of Christ, pants to resemble his exalted Lord. A branch is like the vine on which it grows. It possesses similar qualities, and, nourished by its connexion with the trunk, produces similar fruit. No poisonous qualities harbour in a branch, for none harbour in the vine. So, a likeness will necessarily exist between the Saviour and his flock; a likeness of disposition, in character, in conduct, in interest, and in desires. Those deadly fruits of nature's tree, hatred and envy, and malice and revenge, and furious rage and swelling pride, are the fruits that branches of the living vine will not bear; but the fruits of gentleness and love, of humility and patience, of faith, and hope, and holiness. The same truth is forcibly inculcated in those passages which represent Christians as members of the body of Christ, as his flesh and bones. Does not one spirit actuate the body, and direct every member? Does not one blood move every limb? Does not the same blood flow through the hand that flows through the foot? Does not the same principle that moves the finger, move the arm? Has not every member a similar feeling? Do not all display a similar nature, and have not all a similar interest? Is it thus with the

and have peace with him through the blood of his Son? Can it be said of them, that their sins are forgiven them, and that they have redemption through the blood of Christ, and belong to the household of God? Can it be said of them, that as the faithful wife loves her husband, and esteems his interests hers, so they love the Saviour, and esteem his interest theirs? Can it be said of them, that like affectionate children they obey the Lord, that like admiring brethren they imitate their endeared elder brother? Do they appear like branches of the living vine? displaying likeness to the holy Jesus, and manifesting those heaven-born graces, which his Spirit infuses into every regenerate heart; those lovely fruits that branches of such a tree will bear? Do they appear members of Christ? So connected with him, so like him, that they may be termed even his flesh and bones? Are the desires and dispositions, the love and hatred, the joys and sorrows, the hopes, and fears, and feelings they cherish so like his, that one spirit may be said to move, one life to animate them? This is the Scriptural delineation of a Christian; is this theirs? How many of the moral and the amiable have not one feature of this portrait! Are not many, that even make a more decided profession of religion, utterly unlike the picture drawn in Scripture colours? Their careless lives, their worldly minds, their groelling hearts, their covetous hands, their slandering tongues, their formal prayers, their half-wasted sabbaths, their proud resentful dispositions, their conformity to the vain world, make up a character as unlike the Scripture character of a Christian, as winter is unlike summer, or midnight darkness to noon-day splendour. Can these be disciples of Christ? As well might you expect the branches of a vine to produce only poisonous berries; as well might you expect to find a human body joined to a tiger's limbs. Do many that are called Christians bear those marks, which make their final rejection sure? then inquire what you are. Can you in solemn self-examination trace in yourself the growing, though too imperfect, features of the Christian's likeness? then do you feed on that immortal food, the bread of life; then do you pant after all the Saviour's likeness; and thence go with renewed strength to imitate and serve him, through the rest of life's short and fleeting span. If this is the case, you may rejoice in *those promises*, full of love, and life, and immortality,

which glow in the sacred page ; you may, you *should* believe, that having received Christ, he has received you.

§ 11. The love of Christ claims the return of fervent love, and a most important trait in the Christian character, is love to the Lord Jesus. The Lord himself asserts, that his friends possess this love. "The Father himself loveth you, because ye have loved me."^(o) He declares that, without a high degree of this love, they are not worthy of him. The grand inquiry that he proposed to the apostle Peter, after his fall, an inquiry thrice repeated, was, "Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me?"^(p) The Scriptures pronounce a divine blessing on all who possess this love,^(q) and denounce an awful curse on all that want it.^(r)

How vain is every hope, as to eternity, where this love is absent. *If any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be anathema maran-atha*, an accursed creature, devoted to destruction. Had it been said, if any man hate the Lord Jesus, let him be anathema, millions that now fall under this awful anathema, would have pleaded that it did not refer to them. But the words are far more comprehensive ; If **ANY** man love not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be anathema. Though his character be ever so fair, his moral virtues ever so many, his knowledge ever so correct and extensive, his profession ever so shining, yet if he love not the Lord Jesus Christ, he falls under this anathema.

That love of the Lord Jesus which is thus required from every heir of heaven, is not love which can subsist in the soul, with love to the world and sin. It is love stronger than that which a child cherishes for a parent, or a parent for a child. The Lord Jesus solemnly declares, "He that loveth father or mother more than me, is not worthy of me ; and he that loveth son or daughter more than me, is not worthy of me."^(s) If there be one friend or object on earth as dear to you as the Saviour, you have no proper sense of his worth ; you have no interest in him.

The love the real Christian bears to Christ is love stronger than the love of life itself. The Son of God himself declares this, *He that taketh not his cross and followeth after me, is not worthy of me.*^{*} To take the cross is not to subject ourselves

(o) John xvi. 27.

(p) John xxi. 15.

(q) Eph. vi. 24.

(r) 1 Cor. xvi. 22.

(s) Matt. x. 37, 38.

* To understand aright the expression of taking the cross, and following

to a few small inconveniences or sufferings for the Saviour's sake; but it is to tread in the bleeding way, to encounter mockery, insult, and cruelty, and at last, to close the scene of sorrow by the slow tortures of a death full of shame and agony. The Christian may not actually be called to these sufferings, yet he must possess that love for Christ, which would lead him, if he were supported by his Lord, to encounter them all, and to love the Saviour more than ease and life. Our Lord speaks of this not as the honourable distinction of a few superior characters, but as that without which any one would be unworthy of him. *He, whosoever he be, that taketh not his cross and followeth after me, is not worthy of me.*

The dying love of the Lord Jesus is esteemed by his disciples vast as an immeasurable and fathomless ocean. He is indeed a friend for whom they will sacrifice every other. Thus the apostle acted: *I count all things loss that I may win Christ.* Learning, friends, prospects for future life, ease, health, liberty, and life, all were sacrificed by him for Jesus' sake! When, expecting that he would make the last sacrifice, his friends wept around him, he calmly said, What mean you to weep and break mine heart? for I am ready not to be bound only, but also to die at Jerusalem, for the name of the Lord Jesus."¹ Doubtless multitudes besides have possessed a similar spirit. Many unknown, except in heaven, and others

Christ, we must refer to a custom of the age in which he lived. An able writer thus describes it:

"The evangelist informs us that they obliged our Lord to carry to the place of execution the cross, or at least the transverse beam of it, on which he was to be suspended. Lacerated, therefore, with the stripes and bruises he had received, faint with the loss of blood, his spirits exhausted by the cruel insults and blows that were given him when they invested him with robes of mock royalty, and oppressed him with the incumbent weight of his cross; in these circumstances our Saviour was urged along the road. We doubt not but in this passage to Calvary every indignity was offered him. This was usual. Slaves and malefactors, who were condemned to this death, were compelled to carry the whole or part of the fatal gibbet on which they were destined to die. This constituted a principal part of the shame and ignominy of such a death. Cross-bearer was a term of the last reproach among the Romans. The miserable wretch, covered with blood, from the scourges that had been inflicted upon him, and groaning under the weight of his cross, was, all along the road to the place of execution, loaded with every wanton cruelty. He was pushed, thrown down, stimulated with goads, and impelled forwards by every act of insolence and inhumanity that could be inflicted. There is great reason to think that our blessed Redeemer in his way to Calvary experienced every abuse of this nature, especially when he proceeded slowly along, through languor, lassitude, and faintness, and the soldiers and rabble found his strength incapable of sustaining and dragging his cross any further." *Horne.*

Thus illustrated, how solemn, how expressive is the declaration, *He that taketh not his cross and followeth after me, is not worthy of me.*

(1) Acts xxi, 13.

whose names are in the records of the church below. Luther, invited to Wormes, and besought not to venture himself among the perfidious followers of antichrist, replied, "Since I am sent for, I am certainly determined to enter Wormes in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, though I knew there were so many devils to resist me, as there are tiles to cover the houses in Wormes." An Italian Confessor,* when tempted to forsake his Lord for worldly wealth, replied, "Let their money perish with them, who esteem all the gold in the world worth one day's society with Jesus Christ and his Holy Spirit." A martyr said, "My wife and my children are so dearly beloved to me, that they cannot be bought from me for all the riches and possessions of the duke of Bavaria, but for the love of my Lord God, I will willingly forsake them."† Another sufferer, when asked if he loved not his wife and family, replied, "Yes: if the world were gold, and were mine to dispose of, I would give it to live with them, though it were but in prison; yet my soul and Christ are dearer to me than all."‡

Did these form too high an estimate of the Saviour's worth? Were they willing to lose more than was needful for him? Ah no, my friend, without as high an estimate you cannot be his disciple. He himself has taught this important lesson: "Whosoever he be of you that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple." You may not (and under our mild governors most probably will not) be required to sacrifice friends, liberty, and life for adherence to Jesus, but in heart you must make the sacrifice. The Christian's situation is now very different from what it was in the days of a murderous Mary, and a treacherous, persecuting Charles; but the Christian's spirit must be the same; the Christian's value for Christ must be the same. God must see you a martyr in heart, though you are not called to martyrdom. Nothing less than this can be meant by those solemn and decisive words, "Whosoever he be of you that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple." He may assume the Christian name, he may make the Christian profession, he may join the Christian church, he may indulge hopes of inheriting the Christian's happiness, but he is deceived;—he can-

(v) Luke xiv. 26, 27.

* Galeacius Carracciolus. † George Carpenter. ‡ Killian.

Will he sacrifice his all at the foot of the cross, be my dis-


ch your value for the Saviour? Can you for his sake
 the frown of friends, the ridicule of former com-
 is, the contempt of the great mass of mankind, and
 as decided opposition or persecution in some of its many
 ? Can you endure to become the drunkard's song, to
 yourself your wisdom, your companions, your pleasures,
 profits, your ease, your character, your liberty, your life,
 sacrifice all that is dearest to your heart, for Jesus' sake?
 steems you wise, care you not who deems you foolish?
 miles, care you not who frowns? if he approves, is it to
 little matter who condemns? if he bless, is it to you
 ratively a trifle, though all around you curse? It will
 if you are counting all things loss for Jesus; if you
 heart forsaking all for his sake; if you have indeed
 alue for the Saviour which his love and your wants
 e. Can you exclaim, Give me but a Saviour, great
 I ask no more? Let me but win Jesus, and all I need
 e.

re the adorable Saviour to propose the question to you,
 e proposed thrice to Peter, could you give a similar re-
 were he to say, Lovest thou me? lovest thou me more
 here? more than all the pursuits of life? more than
 s or than children? more than life itself? Couldst thou
 "Blessed Lord, thou knowest all things; I cannot de-
 thee. I trust, Searcher of hearts! thou knowest that I
 bee. I trust thou knowest, that though in myself the
 rthiest of the most unworthy, yet that thy cross is my
 ; thy heaven my hope; thy approbation my reward;
 ve my ambition; thy will my rule. I trust thou knowest
 love thee more than these; if not with more of the *fire*
 passions, yet with a *stronger and more steady attach-*
 an attachment stronger than my love of life. But,
 thou seest I would love thee more; for cold and weak
 love to thee, compared with the infinite extent of thy
 love to me." The Christian may find unspeakable
 rt, when conscious of being able to make such an appeal
 n who searcheth the heart, *Thou knowest that I love*

Amidst all my doubts and fears, my discouragements
 perplexities, my unworthiness and corruption, amidst all

I mourn, and all I pray deliverance from, still that I love thee.

Is your religion a religion of this description? a common delusive thing which makes few or no Christ, which trembles at the frown of a friend of a scoffer, which adapts itself to the fashions which sins against God and duty if an ungodly command that sin which lives in the sunshine of the storm? If this be the case, even now your religion are but delusion; but let me hope better than yet of millions we cannot hope better. Look at the man; he reads his Bible, he goes to church or no atrocious vices stain his life, but he is vain, worldly; he stands on the brink of the grave, with all the eagerness of youth, is grasping a departed life, thinks he is a Christian: but does he prefer the world all beside? See that aged woman; the world is all she grows fonder and fonder of it, more and more about it; as vain, as trifling as in her youngest years she count all things loss for Christ? Behold that young man beginning life; moral and amiable, but putting the concerns of the soul to future years. He enters the world of time with eagerness, but is careless of eternal life; time is devoted to the shop, the counting-house, the farm. His conscience sleeps because no fire



Christ." Self was subdued, and ruled no longer in his life. While some live to pleasure, some to wealth, some to power, all for which he lived was to bring honour to his Lord. It was to do this whether weaving a tent, or preaching the gospel. His love was his ruling passion, strong in life, and strong in death. It was for the sake that prayer, that Christ might be magnified in his body, whether by his life or by his death. It was not his desire that Paul might be magnified, that his name might be honoured far and wide, that ease and comfort, reputation or riches, might be his portion, but that his Lord might be honoured. Nor did he pray that Christ should be honoured merely by the labours and sufferings of a devoted life, but by his death. Could he by labours and sufferings honour his Lord, he was willing to live; could he by dying enhance his Redeemer's glory, he was willing to die. His sufferings were many, but the love of Christ constrained him to bear them all. He was in labours more abundant, in stripes above measure, in prisons more frequent, in deaths often; in journeyings often, in perils of waters, in perils of beasts, in perils by his own countrymen, in perils by the Jews, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils among false brethren; in weariness, in painfulness, in watchings often, in hunger and thirst, in colds often, in cold and nakedness.*

A pious writer remarks, "Here is a man, impelled by the extraordinary principle, sacrificing the honours which society offered him, his ease, and every earthly comfort, and voluntarily embracing, and persevering in, a life exposing him to stripes, to imprisonments, to perils by land and by sea, to constant deprivations, to want, to persecutions, and to death itself. What can constrain such a man to reject the intercessions of his friends who are entreating him to retire from these conflicts? What is it that impels him to reply, 'What can I do but weep and to break mine heart? for I am not only willing to be bound, but to die at Jerusalem.' What is it? We are transported beyond ourselves, it is to God." 'I am willing to die at Jerusalem,' but it is '*for the name of the Lord Jesus.*' It is the love of Christ that beareth him away; it extinguishes every recollection of himself and of his own sufferings. This is the secret of the life of Paul; and this is the

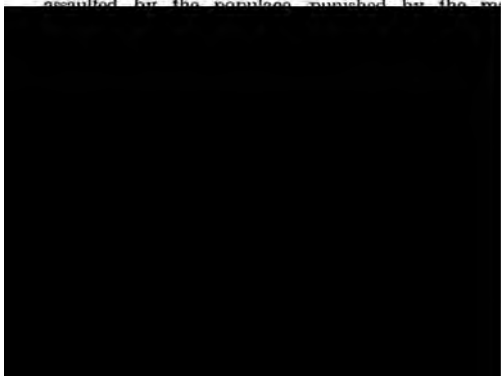
(*) *Phil. i. 20, 21.*

(*) 2 Cor. xi. 23—30

spring and source of all that is distinguished, all that us, in the life of Whitfield, of Brainerd, of Pearce Martyn. In short, this is the source of every thing Christian exertion ;—and where this is wanting, that mains ‘ the region and shadow of death.’

“ It is this principle which disarms death, and makes itself desirable. Hence, while one of the martyrs was his testimony with his blood in Smithfield, a voice came from amidst the flames, saying, ‘ None but Christ—Christ—none but Christ.’ And hence the apostle desires to depart.’ Ah ! Paul, thou mayst well wish thy pilgrimage has been filled with thorns ; many a step hast thou trod ; many an hour of excessive labour thou endured ; many a time hast thou been in perils, in tumults, in hunger, in thirst. No wonder such a pilgrim wishes for repose, should desire to depart—this is not his meaning, ‘ I desire to depart, to be with Christ.’ Yes, this is what impels him heaven this is the torrent that carries him irresistibly along to the end of his Saviour.”*

Referring to the life of the same apostle another distinguished writer says, “ We see him, in the prosecutive purpose, travelling from country to country, enduring species of hardship, encountering every extremity of assault, by the populace, punished by the magistrates.”



than you or I? Had Jesus suffered more for Paul than I? had he sacrificed more, or did he invite him to a heaven? Ah no, the blood which ransomed Paul did to ransom you, and Jesus invites you to the same realms of peace and life. O then, under equal obligation and seek for equal love.

7 years ago died an aged Christian negro. She was visited by some friends of religion. On one occasion them, if it was the will of "Jesus Massa" to call her now, she should be satisfied to go: if it was his will to tarry some time longer she should be satisfied to stay. She felt, that she was waiting for her summons from above; God spared her a little, and she thanked him for it. By and by, when he saw his time, he would come, and then she would thank him for that.

The next evening she appeared faint and low, and said she felt pain from head to foot: "Jesus Massa" had sent the angel, and she thanked him for it. Some day, when he saw his time, he would come and take it away.

She lingered thus for some time, still in pain, but prayer was ever flowing from her lips, she drew near her end. In her greatest extremities, she said her Saviour would tarry a while when he saw fit; and if he did not give it her now, he would give it her yonder, pointing upwards.

Such was the spirit of resignation to the Saviour, displayed by this poor negro slave, and by the great apostle of the Gentiles.

The Christian's love to the adorable Jesus, is described and accompanied by sincere and unreserved devotedness to him. "For of us liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself. Whether we live, we live unto the Lord; and whether we die, we die unto the Lord; whether we live therefore, or die, we live unto the Lord's." "The love of Christ constraineth us; so that we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead: and *that* he died for all, that they which live should henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them, and rose again." "Ye are bought with a price: ye glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which is God's."

Redeemed with the Saviour's blood, the believer, amidst all

LOVE TO CHRIST CONNECTED

defects, lives to Christ; lives not to himself, but to
Lord, who died for him. The Christian is delivered from
vain conversation; becomes one of a peculiar people,
zealous of good works; is not his own, but the Lord's;
and for the sake of Jesus will labour without fainting,
suffer with patience. What has now been laid before
is represented as descriptive of that character in general,
merely in some elevated instances: there is nothing in
description of which grace will not make you a partaker.
In sincerity you go to Christ, and follow him. It is true
standard for the Christian character is much higher than
with which many professors of religion appear satisfied.
Do not be deceived. God's word is not changed. God's
description of a Christian is not altered, to adapt itself to
selfish disposition, and worldly minds. We have every
reason to fear that Christ at last will say to myriads, that in
land of peace profess adherence to the gospel, I never
knew you, depart from me. He is no Christian who lives to
himself; who does not act upon this principle, that he is
not his own, but the Lord's; who does not appear a peculiar person zealous
of good works. Let him plume himself on his conversion,
what he please, he is no Christian.

An expressive description of devotedness to Jesus is
which the apostle describes his own. "I am crucified
with Christ; nevertheless, I live; yet not I, but Christ li

live it al

literally dwelt and governed in them. The apostle himself as much under the influence of Christ as of the devil. Christ liveth in me, and the life I prompts, he rules. How happy a life! how holy its practice! how benevolent its tendency! how its end! But was it the life of an angel? No: of a that man once one of the chief of sinners, but now child of God by faith. O pant, and pray, and labour in devotedness to Jesus Christ. You never will re-seeing too much devoted to him, though millions have being too little.

After this brief delineation of some important parts of Christian character, allow me affectionately to urge on grand inquiry, Do these things meet in mine? Am I free from my sins in the blood of the Lamb, and justified in the Son of God? Is my whole dependence on him? Am I all things loss for him? Am I united to him in a firm as that which binds husband and wife in last-? Do I discern a supreme glory in him, and cherish the love for him? Is there no one thing on earth so dear to me as Christ crucified? The inquiry is needful, for deceive themselves. All is not gold that glitters. Not all that appear penitent truly repent. Not all that profess truly believe. Not all that seem zealous for the gospel powerful. Not all that profess to be disciples of Jesus dwell with Jesus above.

To avoid self-deception is so unspeakably momentous, may be useful to observe how far you might go, and have no saving faith in the Lord Jesus.

You may be free from gross and open sins, may be with many moral virtues, may be chaste and dutiful, liberal, courteous and engaging, and yet be a stranger to faith in the Lord Jesus. All this was the young man's history is recorded by the evangelists; who was kind and pleasing, that Jesus loved him, and yet so that Jesus spoke of him as a perishing sinner, of whose soul there was little hope.^c

You may, alarmed or instructed by the preaching of the Gospel, have forsaken some iniquities in which you once lived, and yet be no Christian. So Herod acted. He

(c) Mark x.

listened for awhile to the instructions of John the Baptist when he heard him, he did many things, and heard him gladly.^d Yet Herod soon murdered the man he once respected when requested by the profligate daughter of a reveller.

3. You may be a hearer of the gospel, and hear its truths with regularity, and yet be a stranger to all its blessings. Such hearers were the Jews at Capernaum; when Jesus himself preached, they crowded and thronged to the place where he uttered his divine lessons, yet were far from embracing the gospel, that he said, "Thou, Capernaum, which art exalted unto heaven, shalt be thrust down to hell."^e "Many (he declares) are called, but few are chosen. Many will be rejected at last that may say to him, 'We have eaten and drunk in thy presence, and thou hast taught in our streets.'"^g

4. You may be impressed and affected by the truth of the gospel, and yet not be a disciple of the Lord Jesus. Felix was. When Paul "reasoned of righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come, Felix trembled."^h The Lord describes one class of hearers of the gospel, who, when they have heard the word, immediately receive it with gladness, but yet have no root in themselves, and so endure but a little time.

5. You may be a professor of the gospel, and yet



Lord, is it I?"^m but no one seems to have suspected Judas; he was the traitor.

8. You may deem yourself a Christian, and yet not be one; some deceive themselves. "But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves."ⁿ

9. You may *profess* to trust in Christ, and call him Lord, and may be even engaged in his service, and yet be no Christian. "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven, but he that doeth the will my Father which is in heaven."^o

How many never advance as far as this, yet all this only would leave you as far short of heaven as even the careless sabbatist! It is needful then to inquire, whether you have gone much further? whether you have received Jesus with all your heart, to cleave to him in pain and in ease, in wealth and poverty, in honour and in dishonour, in the sunshine and the storm, in youth and in age, in life and in death, in time and in eternity?

§ 15. While the adorable Lord Jesus calls for this consecration of yourself to him, does he demand too much? Can he demand too much?

Again contemplate his love, and think how it was enhanced by the utter unworthiness of them for whom he died. For what a world did he suffer! a miserable world! yet in love with sin, the source of all its misery! A world in league with Satan, and in dreadful subjection to him! millions hardened in their crimes! millions more heedless in their folly! every heart by nature set against himself, and not one of whom it could be said, This is not a child of sin and wrath! The busy man apt up in care; the gay pursuing pleasure; the young armed with a fading world; the aged still occupied in its pursuits; yet this active, busy, thoughtless world, all dead! deserving of eternal death! and all under righteous condemnation to all its horrors! A world whose guilt no powers could measure; of whose ruin no heart can form a right conception; and whose wretchedness an inspired pen described those two emphatic words, All dead! Such was the world he pitied. How could he pity it! Such was the world from those polluted tribes he came to collect a colony for heaven. How could he stoop to accomplish this amazing work of love!

(m) Matt. xxvi. 22.

(n) James i. 22.

(o) Matt. vii. 21.

He forsook riches, not like those of earth, vain, sient, but riches of divine glory, divine blessing, majesty. He becomes poor. A babe at Beth of sorrows through successive years, an agonizing Gethsemane, a bleeding victim on Calvary. The sufferer is God made man, for man to die. Oh! from what he was! How infinite the difference torturing cross and his eternal throne! between crown and the many crowns of divine glory the head! between the murderer's cry, Crucify him and the seraph's worship, Holy, holy, holy hosts, the whole earth is full of his glory! Descent abode on earth his love shone like a sun, setting beam. He dispensed blessings with a liberal hand to the body and the soul. He cured the diseased, dead; he taught the ignorant; he forgave the bound up the broken heart. He cheered and friends, he wept and prayed for his enemies. He gave that ransomed penitent a place in Paradise. Has the sun of his love ceased to shine? has the mercies ceased to flow? Ah, no! the stream flows on all its abundance. The sun still shines with all its power has not become less loving since he returned to the bosom of his Father. Do you not

re an assembled world.* And through eternal ages he will bless them with his presence, and enrich them with his love and care. "For the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters; and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes."† O boundless love! that before time began, pitied those that in time would be ruined and undone! Love, that reaches from God's high throne of eternal majesty, to earth's abyss of sin and woe! Love, that from this deep abyss raises countless myriads to glory, honour, and immortality! that will invest with an angel's eternal youth and splendour, millions, once the heirs of sin, decay, and death! that will bless with all an angel's happiness, these millions, once born to mourn, once children of misery! O boundless love! that travelling through eternity, in the greatness of its strength, like the sun travelling as a giant through the heavens, shall make eternity itself one unclouded day of holiness and joy! O love of Jesus Christ! vain were the wish to measure thy heights, and depths, and lengths, and breadths! What dost thou not demand?

This love demands little when it demands your all, and shall it not have that little? could you wish to be but half devoted to him, whose love to you is boundless and eternal? Whoever lingers in the Christian race, make it your study and your prayer to run with speed. Whoever is but half a Christian, make it your concern and supplication to yield to Christ your soul, your life, your heart, your all. Do you want more motives to this? Contrast your present state, if you are indeed a Christian, with what it was. Once your sins unpardoned, like a mountain, were pressing your soul to perdition; now that load is all removed, and *your sins are forgiven you for his name's sake*. Once you had no hope, no true peace, no solid comfort; now peace in believing, and hope of the glory of God, and peace with God, all are or may be yours. Once you were the enemy, now the child, of God. Once the slave of Satan, now the friend of Christ. Once the heir of hell, but now of heaven. Once a fit companion for devils and the damned, now you have come to the general assembly and church of the first-born, whose names are written in heaven. Once all was dark and gloomy round you and before you,

(*) Matt. x. 32. Matt. xxv. 34.


(†) Rev. vii. 17.

now all is bright and cheerful. Once this dream of life was your all, and death a curse, a foe, that would end your fleeting comforts, and consign you to eternal night ; now life is a shadow, eternal life your portion, and death itself a friend, that will conduct you to eternal day. And all this, and more than this, you enjoy through redeeming love. O what heart should not melt before such kindness ? who that enjoys it, should wish to offer to Jesus any thing less than all his heart, all he has, and all he is ?

§ 16. When we connect with this subject the shortness of time, and the nearness of eternity, the considerations should unite to urge upon us the most heart-felt devotedness to our blessed Lord. It is but a little span of service at the most, that you can present to that blessed Redeemer, who suffered in your stead. Time is short. Much of your life is already gone. How many that read this page, will never double the age they have already reached ! How many never see as many more years as they have already seen ! What a scanty glance surveys our departed years ! a still scantier might probably survey our time to come. One may say, I have seen fifteen years, and another, I have seen twenty, and another, I have seen thirty, and another, I have seen forty, and very, very likely shall never see as many more ; and O, what a narrow span is this, to offer in gratitude to him, who will give me a life so lasting, that ages as numberless as the flakes of winter

ect. Oh! my Redeemer, few are the followers thy dying has gained! Few, alas! regard thy sufferings, and seek heaven thou hast so dearly purchased for man. Ah! deceitful, deceiving world! such hopes to renounce, such a pain again to crucify, for the sake of a few poor, short joys of earthly vanity! Perhaps you, my youthful readers, are not clear from such frightful guilt. Perhaps you neglect Saviour who spread the heavens abroad, and who created earth beneath you. Perhaps you indulge no thoughts of heaven; or let any trifling folly drive such thoughts away. Perhaps you forget the eternal bliss of heaven, and the bitter pains and bloody sufferings of the compassionate Saviour; forget all these for trifles so mean, that they would not atone for your thoughts one day of promised pleasure, and they can induce you to forget a gracious God, a crucified Saviour, and an eternal world. Ah! foolish creature and ungrateful, thus to requite the Lord and Giver of salvation! The guilt to yourself of such neglect, is as great as the ingratitude towards him. You, though young, and gay, and thoughtless, are a soul whose worth worlds cannot measure, whose price no gold can pay. You have been viewing the Redeemer's works, the earth, the sun, the stars of light, but your neglected soul in value outweighs them all. The period is coming, when the sun, and all those meaner but brilliant fires, not one enduring fragment will remain; but never will that time arrive when your soul shall cease to live. Were one person to enjoy all the pleasure that has ever been enjoyed by all the nations that have ever lived, all that united would be but a moment of pleasure, compared with that enduring bliss, which the redeemed souls possess in the kingdom of God. And were the sufferings that through almost six thousand years have afflicted so many lives, and broken so many hearts; were the sicknesses and pains, and all the dying pangs, of the countless millions that death has swept away; were all these shed and poured upon one unhappy head, it would be less than a drop, compared with those mountainous billows of misery which, in the world to come, will overwhelm every neglector of the Son of God. These all would not form eternal sufferings, not amount to everlasting sorrow. These immense joys of happiness or pain would have an end, but the joy or sorrow to which you are hastening can have none. How

highly you value this fleeting life! How precious is every uncertain prospect of a few years of peace and ease! How bitter are sufferings when no end of them can be seen! Bitter is it to the galley slave to think, that the chain binds him, binds him for life! How severe a sentence—petual imprisonment! Were such your circumstance insupportable would the load of misfortune appear! Chains for life! This imprisonment for life! What bitterness would the words, “for life,” add to the prison the chain. How great are sorrows when only death can end them! Oh, what will eternal sorrows be? sorrows to which death can ever bring relief? Oh, what will be the wretched creature’s lot who has through eternity to exclaim, “once wooed me, but mercy is gone for ever! God pitied me but has now left me for ever! the Saviour I slighted parted for ever! for ever! Oh, that dreadful for ever! and hope, and comfort, all have left me for ever! and this hellish prison is my abode for ever! This dismal, this eternal heart-ache, this tormenting flame, are my portion for ever! O could that eternity be shortened! Could one hope gleam across the eternal gloom! O could though at the distance of infinite years, appear to end sorrows and my being! But no such comfort can visit! There is no gleam of hope in the distance of eternal time. There is no death that can end my being. The d



CHAPTER III.

PERSONALITY, DEITY, AND INFLUENCES OF THE HOLY SPIRIT.

WHEN the disciple of Jesus contemplates his Saviour's dying love, the exalted allurements presented in a life of piety, and the eternal terrors denounced in a life of vice, he is ready to wonder that all are not saved. But when he looks inward, and, judging from his own heart, perceives what human nature is, he is perhaps more ready to wonder that Jesus has any followers in so dead a world. These views lead the mind to that Spirit of truth, who is the source of piety. To his agency the Christian acknowledges himself indebted for the religion he enjoys; and is comforted and pleased by believing that this divine Friend has done that for others which he has done for him.

It is of high importance to have scriptural views respecting the agency of the Spirit; the agency, and the divinity, and even the personality of the Spirit of God, have been denied. He has been represented as an angel, but most commonly by those who have denied his divinity, as a mere attribute, the power and wisdom of God.

In briefly surveying the Scripture testimony respecting the Holy Spirit, first observe those passages in which his agency is united with the Father and the Son. "Go and baptize all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost."^a "The grace of our Lord Jesus, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost, be with you all."^b

If the Holy Ghost were a mere divine attribute, and not a person, the former of these passages might be read, "baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of his holy power, or holy wisdom, or divine operation." Instead of representing the Lord Jesus as having spoken

(a) Matt. xxviii. 19.

(b) 2 Cor. xiii. 14.

sense and truth, would represent him as uttering without a meaning. For what meaning could be the expression of baptizing in the name of an attribute? If a person took an oath of allegiance to the king, the commons, assembled in parliament, the meaning is obvious, but if he swore allegiance to the king, the commons, and the king's power, the latter part of the oath would have no idea.

When the apostle implored for his Christian brethren the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, he implored most important blessings; and if the Holy Ghost is a divine person, not a less important one, when he speaks of the communion of the Holy Ghost. But if the Holy Ghost is a mere attribute, wisdom, or power, how absurd would it be to pray, that the fellowship of God's power might be with them!

§ 3. The actions and attributes ascribed to the Holy Spirit furnish further proof of his personality.

The Spirit is said to approve or be pleased. "It is good to the Holy Ghost."^c—*To be displeased.* "They rebelled and vexed his Holy Spirit."^d "He is the Holy Spirit of God."^e—*To be resisted.* "Ye shall not resist the Holy Ghost; as your fathers did, so do ye." *strive.* "My Spirit shall not always strive with you, for ye will not hear and speak." "He shall not speak of himself."

1."p—*To be sent for this purpose, and when
ify, comfort, and convince.* "When the Com-
e, whom I will *send* unto you from the Father,
rit of truth which proceedeth from the Father, he
of me."¹ "When he is come he will reprove (or
e world of sin, of righteousness, and of judg-
) *inspire.* "Holy men of old spake as they were
e Holy Ghost."²—*To work and distribute ac-
is pleasure.* "All these *worketh* one and the
dividing to every man according as his *will.*"—
"Quickened by the Spirit."³—*To be the ob-
mpted deception.* Peter said, "Ananias, Why
illed thine heart to lie to the Holy Ghost?"

Is it reasonable to suppose, that in a volume written
men, to instruct the illiterate, such language should
ecting the wisdom or the power of God? Could it,
rely common sense, be said of wisdom, or power,
attribute, that it is pleased, is displeased, is vexed,
s resisted; that it strives, hears, speaks, directs,
bits, searches, and knows, reveals, teaches, is sent,
ks, distributes according to its own will, quickens,
bject of attempted deception. If sensible men
se language so absurd, would inspired men use it
ing a book designed to enlighten, and guide, and
ld?

Is the pronoun HE be repeatedly applied, even by
elf, to the Spirit, if the Spirit were merely one of
tions? HE shall testify. I will send HIM. When
HE will reprove the world. HE, the Spirit of
ill guide you into all truth. HE shall not speak
F, but whatsoever HE shall hear shall HE speak.
ow you things to come. HE shall glorify me.
ceive of mine. Dividing according as HE will.
e be any propriety in applying expressions like
l's power or wisdom? Would even a child make
? Can we then suppose that he who spake as
pake, should speak thus unintelligibly? Unita-
eer and rant about eastern allegories and person-
t we may defy them to produce an instance from

3. (g) John xv. 26. (r) John xvi. 7, 8. (s) 2 Pet. i. 21.
Cor. xii. 11. (u) 1 Pet. iii. 18. (v) Acts v. 3.

the grave, sedate language of a sensible man of so absurd, as the above would be if it were but of metaphor.

§ 4. The plain inference from these arguments is, that the Holy Spirit is not a mere attribute, but a person to show that he is a divine person.

He is called God by Peter. "Why hath Satan heart to lie to the Holy Ghost. Thou hast not but unto God."^w As lying to the Holy Ghost unto God, the natural inference is, that the Holy Ghost is God.

The Holy Ghost is eternal. "Christ, who is the eternal Spirit offered himself."^x None is eternal but God.

The Holy Ghost is omniscient. "The Spirit knoweth the things, even the deep things of God. For what the things of a man, save the spirit of a man knoweth? Even so the things of God, knoweth no one, but the Spirit of God."^y Could this assertion be made of any creature? Of what creature could it be affirmed, that he knows the treasures of the infinite Mind, knows the inmost secrets of the Creator's breast, and searcheth even the deep things of God? Respecting God it is said, "His thoughts are unsearchable."^a "His understanding is infinite."^a "There is no end to his understanding."^b He is "the only wise God."^c These passages refute such a supposition as that that the creature can search the depths of his Creator's wisdom.

y the renewing of the Holy Ghost."* "Are sanctified by Spirit of God."† "Abound in hope through the power he Holy Ghost."‡ "Have the love of God shed abroad heir hearts by the Holy Ghost."§ "Are *led by the Spirit*,¹ shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting."^k These things not be the effects of an angel's agency, for elsewhere it is aresed, that believers are *born of God*, and that every good and every perfect gift cometh from the Father of mercies. therefore who is the distributor of these best gifts, must self be God.

these blessings are too great to be communicated by any g who is not divine. Could the highest archangel be esented as the author of them? Could it without the utt impiety be said, that believers are born of Gabriel, are tified by Gabriel, abound in hope and love by Gabriel, led by Gabriel, and shall of Gabriel reap life everlasting? ould not such assertions shock every pious feeling? Would ot be felt that such language exalted the creature to the ator's place? Yet, unless the Spirit were one with God, it ild be as improper to apply such expressions in reference im as to an archangel.

6. Finally, his divinity is proved from his being united the Father and the Son in the baptismal form, and in blessing implored for Christians. To unite a mere attri- with God in those solemn forms would be absurd; but us to unite a creature, and pay him the same religious ge as his Creator.

Besides the numerous passages that have been brought d in proof of the deity of the Son and Spirit, the Scrip- bound with others, which admit of no reasonable inter- on if that doctrine be rejected. Of this description are lowing: "And God said, Let US make man in OUR after OUR likeness."¹ After the fall of man the GOD said, "Behold the man is become *as one of us*, r good and evil."^m Similar language is used on other s. The Lord said, "Let US go down."ⁿ In the e the divine glory which Isaiah saw, Jehovah is de- s saying, "Whom shall I send, and who will go for he language of the Most High on these occasions is

. 5. (f) 1 Cor. vi. 11.

v. 18. (h) Gal. vi. 8.

(n) Gen. xi. 7.

(g) Rom. xv. 13.

(i) Gen. i. 26.

(o) Isa. vi. 8.

(h) Rom. v. 5.

(m) Gen. iii. 22.

correct and just, if the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are one God ; but if the doctrine of the Unitarians were true, the language would be unreasonable.

§ 8. The Christian is represented as unspeakably indebted to the Holy Spirit, whose benevolent agency is to him the source of unutterable good. When the subject is mentioned in a general way, the Holy Spirit's influence is described as of the utmost importance.^p When the sacred writers descend to particulars, and enumerate distinctly the various blessings bestowed by the Holy Spirit, they mention numerous most precious mercies.

The whole renewal of man is ascribed to his influence. "Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh ; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit." "As many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, *even* to them that believe on his name: which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God."^q

The different parts of the new creation are traced to his agency.—*He enlightens the mind.* "Thou gavest thy good Spirit to instruct them."^r "We have received the Spirit which is of God, that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God."—*Repentance is ascribed to divine influence.* "I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the

shall live."^a "But ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, ye are justified, in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by of our God."^b "The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, patience."^c "That blessed Spirit who thus meetens for imfise all who come to Jesus, is represented *as assisting prayer*. "We have access by one Spirit unto the Father."

"The Spirit also helpeth our infirmities."—*He helps us to persevere*. "That good thing which was committed unto thee, keep by the Holy Ghost which dwelleth in us."^d "The promise of spiritual comfort also appears peculiarly his."

The Lord Jesus said, "I will pray the Father, and he will give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you forever."^e

Besides other passages in which the work of the Holy Spirit is peculiarly mentioned, the Scriptures contain multitudes in which the necessity of divine influence is declared, or its benefits described in a more general way as benefits bestowed by God.

"We are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works."^f "God worketh in you both to will and to do his good pleasure."^g "The very God of peace sanctify you wholly; the God of all grace make you perfect, stablish, strengthen, settle you."^h "The God of peace make you perfect in every good work to do his will, working in you that which is well-pleasing in his sight."ⁱ "Without me ye can do nothing."^j

If a partaker of the Saviour's love, surely you now acknowledge "By the grace of God I am what I am."^k

9. The subject presents an important view of the Christian character. The representation given of the Christian as a temple of God, or of the Holy Spirit, is of a peculiarly solemn, solemn, and awakening nature. The temple was set apart for God. It was devoted to the worship and service of God; was favoured with his special presence; and, as far as any place on earth could be so, was credited as his abode. How important therefore is this representation of a real Christian! the temple of God—redeemed in the world, and solemnly consecrated to the worship and

^a Rom. viii. 13.

^b Eph. ii. 18.

^c Eph. ii. 4, 5, 9, 10.

^d Heb. xiii. 20, 21.

^e 1 Cor. vi. 9, 11.

^f 2 Tim. i. 14.

^g Phil. ii. 12, 13.

^h John xv. 1, 2, 4, 5.

ⁱ Gal. v. 22-24.

^j John xiv. 16.

^k 1 Pet. i. 3-5; v.

^l 1 Cor. xv. 15

service of the Most High—Holiness to the Lord inscribed upon this temple, and God, by his Spirit, there taking up his abode.

This is a description of the Christian character which cannot possibly comport with a life of worldliness, ambition, sensuality, or pride.

As reasonably and as truly might a temple of Dagon, or of Moloch, or of Juggernaut, be called the temple of Jehovah, as a mere nominal Christian be esteemed the temple of God's Holy Spirit. On the Christian's heart this view should have an impressive and awakening tendency. "Am I the temple of God, and shall I not cherish those dispositions which he approves, and seek those graces that should dwell in his temple? Shall I not apply to him for aid, and strive with all my power to banish from this temple those polluting lusts that would fain intrude, and offend its blessed inhabitants? Should pride, or ambition, or selfishness, or covetousness, or malice, or envy, or rancour, or revenge, or love to the world, be cherished in my heart, I should then harbour in this temple the detestable brood of hell. And am I indeed the temple of God? O what manner of person ought I to be in all holy conversation and godliness!

§ 10. Closely connected with this view of the Christian character, is the test of self-examination, furnished by this subject. The Spirit of God operating on the heart, must produce a resemblance of the mind which was in Christ. Not indeed at once a perfect resemblance, but a resemblance progressively advancing nearer to perfection. The Spirit is declared to lead and guide the submissive soul; will he lead and guide in any path, except the path which Jesus trod? If the Spirit leads the soul, he will lead it to all the mind which was in Christ; and in the narrow path of watchful, humble holiness. The Spirit is declared to renew the mind. In whose image will he renew it, except the image of Christ? The God of truth declares, "If any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his."^k Christ himself was a pattern of meekness and humility, of gentleness and love, of deadness to the world, of forgiveness to enemies, benevolence to friends, and devotedness to God. The Spirit of Christ will prompt the soul that feels his influence to follow Christ; will renew the soul in *the likeness of its Saviour*. How important a test for judg-

^k Rom. viii. 9.

r real character is thus set before us ! Christ was
 Do you indulge ruling pride ? If so, you have not
 you are none of his. Christ was devoted to God.
 areless of him ? If so, you have not his Spirit, you
 of his. Christ in his temper displayed meekness,
 , and forbearance. Do haughtiness, and harshness,
 ice reign in yours ? If so, you have not his Spirit,
 none of his. Christ was forgiving to his enemies.
 nplacable and unforgiving to yours ? If so, you have
 spirit, you are none of his. Christ was dead to this
 s it the object of your love, and the aim of your
 o, you have not his Spirit, you are none of his.
 , holy, harmless, and undefiled. Do you live the
 vrant of any lust, the slave of any sin ? If so, you
 his Spirit, you are none of his. But do you feel
 n your soul a strong desire to grow like him ? do
 relish for spiritual objects, a devotedness to Christ ?
 perience a prevalent concern to acquire his image ?
 , humble, self-denying, meek and gentle, dead to
 and all its charms, alive to God, and bent on hea-
 a may surely take encouragement from this, and
 one of the clearest testimonies to your possession of
 of God ; for doubtless the reverse of the solemn de-
 just mentioned, is as true as that declaration itself,
 n have the Spirit of Christ, he is one of his.
 The promised aid of the Spirit furnishes an encou-
 rative for pursuing eminent holiness. " Work out
 salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God that
 a you both to will and to do of his good pleasure."
 Christian left to his own feeble powers, he might be
 at times, almost to sink beneath the load of life, and
 exertion hopeless. But, God worketh in you ;—
 v is wanted to insure the acquisition of every grace ?
 eth in you, both to will and to do. He gives the
 e. He gives ability to execute the desire, to do
 soul longs to perform. Could a promise like this
 n reference to much meaner objects than advance-
 ards heaven, how powerful would be its effect.
 id to the pious husbandman, by a voice from hea-
 your fields with care, you shall not labour in vain,
 s *with you.*" How zealous would be his labour !

How rich a harvest would he anticipate! What an incitement would he feel to activity!

§ 12. Hence we perceive no real Christian can have sufficient excuse for living the slave of any corrupt habit or temper. We sometimes hear persons that profess religious knowledge respecting some corruption indulged in the temper, or conduct, I know it is wrong, but I cannot help it. If such persons possess the grace of God, this excuse will be of no avail. They can help what is amiss, for Jesus says, "My grace is sufficient for thee;" and his apostle declares, "I can do all things through Christ that strengtheneth me." A professed Christian to plead in excuse of improper conduct, "I cannot help it," is either to declare he is no Christian, or to utter a plea which is absolutely false. If he be a Christian, the grace of Christ would, if sought, be sufficient to enable him to discharge the most difficult duties, and to master the most obstinate habits of vice.

§ 13. The important discoveries which the Holy Spirit makes, respecting the blessed Spirit's agency, are connected with cautions or directions of the utmost moment to eternal welfare. "Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lusts of the flesh."^m "Be ye filled with the Spirit."ⁿ "For ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, whereye ye are sealed with the day of redemption."ⁿ As our obligations to the Holy Spirit are so immense, as advancement in the divine life, and the enjoyment of his presence, depend upon his blessing, to neglect or grieve him is unspeakably foolish and wicked. Can a lamp burn without oil to feed its flame? can the cold earth bloom with vernal beauty, without the sun to warm its surface, and to call that beauty forth? can the stream whose fountain is dried up? can the limbs move, when the heart has ceased to play? Yet as easily would the lamp burn without oil, the earth bloom without the enlivening sun, the stream flow without a fountain, and the limbs move when the heart is still in death, as man shine in Christian graces without the sanctifying Spirit. Then prize the Spirit. Grieve not the Spirit; resist not his gentle motions; stifle not his still small voice. Grieve not the Spirit. This admonition expresses the interest he takes in human welfare. Grieve him not by slighting his blessed influences. Grieve him not

(D) Gal. v. 16. (m) Eph. v. 18. 1 Thess. v. 19. (n) Eph. i.


ing his aid. Grieve him not by allowing uncleanness, and hateful passions, to harbour in his temple. Do not by lagging in the Christian course, when he bids you to run the race that is set before you. Grieve him by cherishing a slothful lukewarm mind, when he is that your soul desires after fervent piety and distinctness. Perhaps the Scriptures contain no admonition so momentous as this, yet how is this forgotten! Do not kill, Thou shalt not commit adultery, and the commandments, are frequently recollected, but, Grieve not the Spirit of God, is, by many that profess religion, an unregarded precept. As you wish to be meetened with blessedness, let regard to this important rule govern your life. Often think, "Is there any thing in the disorder of my heart, or the conduct I pursue, calculated to grieve the Spirit? or am I anxious to enjoy his blessed aid, and to be guided and led by the Spirit?"

In his admonitions the Lord Jesus Christ adds, what is his exhortation to pray for the Spirit's aid, "I say unto you, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; and where it shall be opened unto you. For every one that asketh; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened. If ye, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more heavenly Father will he give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him." Encouraging consideration! such a Father will bestow a blessing so precious!

We are taught that the Spirit's influence is of so great consequence to our own comfort, holiness, and happiness, that it is of equal importance in our efforts to benefit others. "Who then is Paul, and who are the ministers by whom ye believed, even as the Spirit came to every man? I have planted, Apollos watered; but God giveth the increase. So then neither is he that planteth, neither he that watereth; but God that giveth the life." ^p

An animating motive for gratitude is furnished by the history in this chapter. Had a kind physician, at an immense expense, rescued from the gallows a wretch condemned to die, and then cured him of a deadly plague that infused its

poison through every vein, and threatened him with a dreadful and inevitable death, this man would lie under a vast and two-fold obligation to his kind benefactor. Yet how insignificant would be these obligations compared with those under which every heir of heaven is brought. He, like this ruined but favoured criminal, has enjoyed a double deliverance from death and ruin, from condemnation without and the plague of sin within. How divinely amiable does God appear as exhibited in the Scriptures, and how infinitely glorious a scheme is that for human redemption! The Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, conjointly the infinite and everlasting God, are all represented as acting their part in the wonderful scheme. The Father pities an undone world, and cherishes love so infinite, that he gives his beloved Son to be the sinner's sacrifice. He sends him into this world, by one dreadful offering of himself, to atone for sins unnumbered, and for guilt that deserved eternal wrath. The Son, acting his part in the wonderful plan of mercy, assumes human nature, and comes to be a willing victim. He dies, and accomplishes his Father's purposes, and his own. The scheme of mercy has proceeded so far, that God can now be just, and criminal man be saved; sin be punished, and the sinner be forgiven; for the Son of God has atoned for sin, and brought in an everlasting righteousness. He rises from the dead, and his Father thus declares that justice has no more claim upon him. He rises to heaven,



s scheme of mercy, stands infinitely indebted to the Fa-
 Son, and Holy Ghost. Had the kindness of either been
 eld, man would have been for ever undone. The atone-
 of the Son would not benefit the sinner, were the in-
 e of the Spirit withheld, nor would the influences of
 pirit prepare him for heaven, were an interest in the
 ment denied him; nor would either have been exerted
 m, if the Father had not so loved the world as to give
 ily-begotten Son for human salvation. O, see God act-
 ll through this scheme of mercy, and filling up the won-
 whole. See man, the object of the eternal Father's
 of the Son's sufferings, and of the Spirit's influence.
 very one that reaches the abodes of light, indebted, eter-
 indebted, to Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Among
 ations of the saved, not one can or ever will be found
 hus indebted. Not one of whom it can be said, He owes
 appiness to other friends, or other sources; he owes sal-
 n to the purity of his heart, to the vigour of his exertions,
 e merit of his labours, or the severity of his sufferings.
 ng the countless myriads of the great multitude that no
 can number, not one such will be found. The agency
 od will be seen to have been exerted for them all; the
 er to have loved them all; the Son to have atoned for
 all; the Spirit to have renewed them all. The salva-
 of each and all, will be seen as of God, from first to last.
 , while God shines conspicuous through all the scheme
 ve, while God is seen beginning, pursuing, completing
 vonderful plan, the praise, the endless praise, will be the
 's. Adore this mysterious love; admire this amazing
 of mercy; and pray to be the ineffably happy partaker
 is unsearchable grace.

CHAPTER IV

THE CHRISTIAN LIFE A LIFE OF FAITH

§ 1. IT is said respecting the author of the Nightingale that in his garden he had the painting of a seat at a distance, appeared really a seat, but when he drew near, he perceived the deception, and read

Invisibilia non decipiunt.

The things unseen do not deceive.

How true ! how important !

“ All, all on earth is shadow, all beyond is substance.”

“ How solid all where change shall be no more !”

The Christian, while described as devoted to contemplation, is presented as actuated by a principle, which makes him familiar with things unseen, more familiar than with things seen, with time and sense. That principle is Faith.

Faith in all cases, means confidence in the truth of propositions which are presented to the view of the mind. I am told there is such a country as India. The

ondent emotions and conduct. I am told of some impending danger, that threatens me with ruin. Belief in the statement excites concern, alarm, and endeavours to avoid the threatening evil. I am told of some important advantage offered to me. Belief in the statement leads me to embrace the offer, and seize the proffered good. If I merely think it probable that such danger threatens, or such good is offered, cannot be said to believe either the one or the other. I think it likely, that is all; and the mere likelihood, though it may excite some degree of alarm or desire, will probably do nothing more.

Saving faith contains a confidence in the truth of those statements, which the gospel makes respecting the Lord Jesus Christ; in other words, the mind is convinced of the *certain*ty of the discoveries of the Scripture respecting him, and his salvation. That in this case, as well as where the subjects of time are concerned, this confidence is a principal part of faith, is evident from the divine word.^a

In saving faith, with this conviction of the truth of the great discoveries of the gospel, is united the cordial acquiescence of the heart in this way of salvation. The Scriptures declare that it is with the heart man believeth unto righteousness.^b When the believing patriarchs are represented as persuaded of the promises, it is added, *and embraced them*.^c Jesus Christ appears to represent coming to him as the same thing as believing on him,^d and believers on him are said to receive him.^e As the heart is represented as the seat of the affections, to believe with the heart, suggests not merely the idea of confidence in a truth proposed, or a friend revealed, but the cordial affectionate reception of that truth. And such is the case with every believer in the Son of God. Am I convinced that sin has undone me? Am I anxious for that salvation, which I feel beyond the attainment of human efforts? While in this state of mind, am I convinced that it is indeed a faithful saying, that Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners? This is a declaration full of comfort. I feel it suited to my condition. I perceive the Son of God such a Saviour as my wants require. My heart welcomes this Saviour, and cordially acquiesces in this scheme of mercy; I rest on his

(a) Rom. iv. 20—22. Heb. xi. 13. Heb. xi. 1.

(c) Heb. xi. 13.

(d) John vi. 35.

(b) Rom. x. 10.

(e) John i. 12.

promise, and intrust my all for eternity to his care. No can say, Lord, I believe.

Let it not be imagined that the view now given of sa faith, would insinuate that God is not its giver. He is str its author, as he enlightens the mind, and disposes it to a correct judgment respecting the certainty of gospel tri and as he disposes the heart to acquiesce in the gospel act of salvation, and leads the penitent to commit his etern to the Lamb that was slain.

§ 2. The Christian lives by faith, as by faith in the So God he is delivered from condemnation, and made the of eternal life, and as faith directs his conduct and gov his life.

While believers are thus represented as forgiven, just and accepted with God through faith ; the Scriptures expli declare that this is not in consequence of some virtue exi in faith itself, but in consequence of what the Son of God done and suffered, whose people they become by faith. fore they believe they are ungodly, and after they believ still unworthy.^f

The atonement of the blessed Jesus, is that on which j fying faith more especially fixes. Hence it is describe FAITH IN HIS BLOOD.^g The expression is remarkable. not faith in his divine commission, faith in his rich ben lence, faith in his gracious promises, faith in his lovely

l them to do. Faith influenced Noah. Perhaps a
 y before the deluge, God announced that tremendous
 ent, and commanded him to build the ark. At that
 and probably for many succeeding years, no indications
 : flood were seen. Seed-time and harvest, summer and
 r, pursued their usual course. Sun and moon, and all
 eavenly bodies, moved in their accustomed order. But
 had spoken, and assured of God's faithfulness and vera-
 Noah prepared for the dreadful day, which he was sure
 ld come. He built the ark—the day of destruction ar-
 l—but he was safe. Of Abraham, the father of the faith-
 it is added, “By faith Abraham, when he was called to
 out into a place which he should after receive for an in-
 stance, obeyed; and he went out not knowing *whither* he
 nt.”^h “He knew not whether the people would be
 ends or enemies, kind or cruel.” Whether sorrow or com-
 t awaited him in that strange land. But assured of the
 isdom and goodness of God, he confided fully in the pro-
 mise that God made him. God had commanded him to for-
 ake his country. This was sufficient. Wherever he might
 oam, God would be his guide. This was enough to render
 him safe and happy.

§ 4. In the account given by the word of God respecting
 faith, it is represented as producing effects similar to those
 which sight would produce. What sight is with respect to
 his world, faith is with respect to the next.

As faith in regard to eternal things, is similar to sight with
 respect to those of time, so it produces effects exactly similar.
 Were the Christian to see the Son of God expiring for his sins,
 what more could sight effect, than lead him to abhor himself,
 to hate his sins, and to yield himself a living sacrifice to his
 crucified Lord? All this faith effects, wherever it is genuine.
 Were the glories of eternity unveiled to the believer's eye, and
 the bliss of heaven presented to his sight, what more could the
 sight effect, than lead the soul to seek its portion above, to
 slight the trifles of time, and to feel and act as a pilgrim upon
 earth? Where faith is possessed, all this will be effected; not
 with feelings as lively, or perceptions as vivid, as those pro-
 duced by sight, but the choice will be as real, and the affec-
 tions as truly turned to heaven, and fixed and centring ther-

(4) Heb. xi. 8.

Were the scenes of eternal judgment, or the dark prison of eternal misery, presented to the Christian's sight, what could it effect more than lead him earnestly to flee from the wrath to come, and to prepare to render his last account? And this too faith effects on all that feel its saving power.

Were a dying Saviour, a blissful heaven, the awful judgment-throne, and a miserable hell, presented *together* to the Christian's view, what more could the sight effect, than lead him so earnestly to flee the dreaded evil, so devoutly to seize the proffered good, that, compared with this, health, and liberty, and friends, and life, should seem things of no account in his esteem? Could sight do more than lead him to resign all these, and to choose pain, and bonds, and death, so that he might but win Christ and heaven? All this faith has done; and done not only in one solitary instance, but in millions of instances. It has been supposed that since Christianity arose, not less than fifty millions of martyrs have laid down their lives for its sake. Thus even when sufferings or death are in the way, faith still leads the true Christian forward. It is an unseen heaven that he seeks, an unseen hell that he dreads, an unseen God that he loves, and an unseen Saviour to whom he resigns himself. Yet, while all that in his esteem is most dreadful or most alluring is unseen, he avoids or pursues these unseen things, with a resolution as strong, and a heart as decided, as that of the most inveterate worldling, who is pursu-

could he have chosen God as his portion with more
 ? could he have sought eternal rest with more patient
 ance? He suffered, he acted, he endured, as seeing
 o is invisible, and seeing the things that are unseen.
 same were the effects of faith on the holy host of con-
 who were tortured, were stoned, were sawn asunder,
 mpted, were slain with the sword; who wandered
 1 sheep-skins and goat-skins; being destitute, afflicted,
 ed, of whom the world was not worthy.¹

y the faith of these sufferers accomplished all that
 ave been accomplished if they had beheld their "God
 r," and their wished-for home. Could they, who died

that they might obtain a better resurrection, have
 ore than die, if all the solemn and triumphant scenes
 resurrection had been exhibited to their view? Could
 io met death in a hundred horrid forms, or wandered
 lens of wild beasts, more desolate than they—could
 ve endured more constantly if the world they sought
 n continually before their eyes? Faith was indeed to
 e the substance of things hoped for. They all endured
 g things invisible.

cordance with this view of the effects of faith, the Chris-
 described as walking by faith. "We walk by faith,
 sight."^k The idea suggested appears to be, that the
 n pilgrim pursues his journey to eternity with his
 nd soul, and affections, and actions, directed by those
 objects which are as yet unseen. He goes forward
 step, influenced solely in his choice, and heart, and
 t, not by the visible objects, which charm the deluded
 worldly men, but by the invisible realities of an ever-
 state.


*It overcomes the world.¹—Faith produces love.^m—
 insures holy obedience.ⁿ—Faith promotes inward
 as well as outward obedience.^o—Faith is a source of
 nd comfort.^p—Faith gives energy to patience, and
 es perseverance.¹* Faith is a shield. The warrior's
 protected his body, and warded off the thrusts and
 f his enemy; so faith protects the Christian warrior.

¹ xi. 35—38. (^k) 2 Cor. v. 7. (^l) 1 John v. 4. (^m) 1 John
 Pet. ii. 7. 1 Pet. i. 8. (ⁿ) John xiv. 15, 23. Gal. v. 6. James
 26. (^o) Acts xv. 9. Gal. iii. 26. 1 John iii. 2, 3. (^p) Rom. xv. 13.
 (^q) 1 Pet. i. 3. 2 Pet. iii. 14. 1 Thess. v. 8.

It is a breast-plate. The breast-plate, as the word suggests, was designed to guard the breast, and thus protect the vital parts, and especially the heart. This is the place of faith, and while faith is possessed, the heart will be engaged for God, its affections will still turn to him, and the humble believer, safe in this impenetrable breast-plate, will be kept by the power of God through faith to final victory and full salvation.—*Faith produces spirituality of mind and affection.*¹—*Faith can be exhibited only by its fruits.* “Show me thy faith without thy works.”² Do it if thou canst. It is beyond thy power to do so.—*Faith cannot exist without being productive of the fruits thus described.* This is extremely evident from observing, that in the most solemn manner, the Son of God declares, that those only shall enter heaven who do his Father's will, and yet that with equal certainty salvation is promised to every believer.³ The inference is clear; every believer will do the will and hearken to the precepts of God.

Need we wonder that the faith which produces such effects, and with which the most valuable blessings are connected, is described as precious faith; and have we not reason to unite in the frequent prayer of the apostles, Lord, increase our faith!

§ 5. Are you a believer? You have borne the name of Christian; but most who bear that sacred and abused name, are practical unbelievers. If you have been one of the care-



arth!—He tells you of an eternal hell, which sin has merited, and to which sin is sinking you; and do you believe? O! if you did, you would flee from the wrath to come.

A friend tells you of some important good that you may obtain;—you follow it. Of some pleasures you may enjoy;—you pursue them. Why? because you believe his word, and believe they will increase your satisfaction. Perhaps you are ill.—An acquaintance tells you of a medicine that is an infallible antidote to your disorder: you take it. Why? have you ever tried its virtues?—No: but you believe him who says so. In all these cases you are a believer, and faith leads you to pursue desired good.

God tells you in his word that, pitying your misery, and concerned for your happiness, he gave his best Beloved to suffer in your place. This divine friend calls you to follow him, and assures you that eternal life is the heritage of his disciples. The joys of earth are only like gliding shadows or departing dreams of joy. Heaven alone possesses the fair reality. Every thing fades here; nothing fades there. Here time is short; but there, eternity how long! Yet in this moment must that eternity of bliss be gained, or never be obtained. Now would the Saviour make you an heir of heaven; but beyond the grave he will never extend to you a pitying, helping hand. All this he declares to you in his word. You profess, perhaps, to believe it all, and, oh dreadful!—you neglect it all. Do you believe him? What infatuation! what want of common sense to suppose you do! No! if you did you would flee to the shelter of his cross, and find salvation here. No! if you did believe him, you would not prefer earth to heaven, and a moment to eternity. No! if you did believe him, you would not continue dying of sin, and careless of the great Physician. And while you neglect him, what are you but a practical infidel? You may talk of eternity and prefer time before it, but not believe in eternal life, as the gift of God through Jesus Christ, and think of eternal life, without feeling that time is a dream, and life a vapour. If this earth could be hung on one side of a balance, and a speck of dust be laid in the other scale, would the dust weigh down the world? Sooner would it do so, than time be preferred to eternity, by him who cordially believes what the blessed Scriptures say about his wretchedness, and his only remedy!

Ah! what solemn scenes will soon open upon y
 endless world and all its endless joys or woes; the
 Redeemer and the eternal God. Were there only a
 bility of that solemn world, it might be sufficient to
 reasonable creature indifferent from one so transitory a
 rishing as this; but here it is not barely probability, i
 tainty; and yet will you grasp at the passing shadows
 world, and neglect the endless realities of the other! N
 say of a part of life, It is gone; yet you look forwa
 hope for other years to come; but what will be yo
 when looking backward, you must say, Time is gon
 looking forward, Eternity is come. O that awful, that
 ful eternity! How will it torment the murderers of time
 will it teach the thoughtless sinner, and the mere r
 Christian, their folly and their madness! In this wo
 most wretched may look for ease from earthly misery
 hallowed rest of the grave; there, they may say, the
 cease from troubling, and the weary are at rest. Bu
 they enter that neglected eternity, oh, what a chan
 there be in this respect! As there no death alarms the
 so no death relieves the miserable. On earth, sleep ma
 the most miserable, intervals of ease; but there will
 sleeping in hell. The sufferer on the bed of distracti
 pain often finds relief in the power of laudanum and
 O how often, when sitting by such a bed, have I t
 there will be no laudanum in the world of wretched
 no medicines there to assuage the force of pain, or ren
 sufferer insensible of his state! All this too deserved
 And do you profess to believe the book which warns
 such danger, and shows you how to escape? and yet
 slight that salvation? O what heads, what hearts, ha
 who, professing to believe these things, can trifle life
 You would start with horror at a proposition to murde
 self; can you, without hesitation, do ten times wor
 murder your immortal soul? by a careless, ungodly li
 it for destruction;—fit it for hell;—make it the eternal
of God;—prepare it to be a suitable companion for de
 and eternally subject it to Satan's power! If you we
 room surrounded with armed enemies, and one were
 with two lists in his hand, in one or the other of w
 name of every person present would be found; if all

devoted to death, consigned to the bayonets of the surging soldiers, and all in the other list sure of life and now anxious would you be to know in which list your good ! especially if the dead list were the more numerous the two ! Yet here all your anxiety would be concerned, that must soon end by disease if saved from violence. eternal life or eternal death is before you ; and do you think it worth while to inquire, Is my name written in the book of life ? am I a candidate for glory ? have I fled to the Giver of life eternal, and found salvation in him ? Is my name still stand in the list of those who are the children of sin, the children of wrath, and the heirs of hell ? O low-sinner ! if you have hitherto professed to believe in Christ, and yet with the multitude neglected Jesus and salvation learn more wisdom now. You cannot neglect this longer, without neglecting it for ever. Be then what profess to be, be not a hypocrite or a practical infidel, and will be a Christian.

But, perhaps, the eye that reads this page is an eye that sees no glory like that it sees in Christ ; yet if you have to hope it is so, still it is needful often to commune with your own heart, often to examine your own condition. Consider yourself, my friend ; the Judge eternal will try us all. Enjoy every grace ; hereafter all must be tried. And is faith like that described in the precious Scriptures, as saving and saving ? is it the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen ? does it engage your heart fully and decidedly for God and Christ ? does it lead you to act as seeing him who is invisible ? and though you do not see God, to live, and pray, and persevere as if you saw him ? Though the blessed Jesus is unseen by you, does faith lead you to trust him, and love him, and follow him ? so that you may be said, whom having not seen, *you* love ; in whom, though you now see him not, yet believing, *you* rejoice ; and with that word you hear with as much deference, as if you saw him speaking from heaven. Will the things that are seen would engage your heart, will they lead you to look above them ? to choose a world you never saw, before that you daily see ? to set your affection upon a heaven, of which by sight you never gained the least glimpse, in preference to the honours, and profits,

and pleasures of earth and time? and to flee more earnestly from an unseen world of ruin, than you would from

"Hunger, poverty, and pain,
"And all the transitory ills below?"

Does faith cause you, with Enoch, to walk with God with Noah, to dread God's threatened judgments? with Abraham, to forsake an earthly, and seek a better country? with Moses, to esteem the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt? with Paul, to count all things but loss that you may win Christ, and be found in him? and with all the holy host of martyrs, whatever you may lose, whatever you may suffer here, still to persevere, looking for a better resurrection?

In short, does faith thus govern your heart, thus direct your choice, thus rule your conduct, thus fire your love, thus wing your desires, thus strengthen your hopes, and thus enable you to live on earth as a stranger travelling to heaven? If it be genuine, if it be saving, these will be its effects; and if effects of this kind are not produced, you have but the shadow, instead of the substance.

Make it your study and prayer to bring faith into daily and hourly exercise. You believe in a gracious, an all-seeing, and almighty God: act as in his sight. You believe in an atoning Saviour: look daily to him as your life, your all. You believe in eternal judgment: now live as one whose actions and thoughts must then be scrutinized; live as you will wish to have done, when standing to receive the sentence of your Judge. You believe that there is a happy heaven: pursue it with that earnestness which eternal life demands. You believe that there is a miserable prison of eternal punishment: watch and pray against sin, the source of misery, the cause of the creation of hell. You believe that your way to eternity is beset with snares: watch and pray lest you enter into temptation. You believe that you are dark in your reason, and weak in your powers: listen then with all humility to him whose knowledge is as boundless as yours is confined. Receive implicitly whatever Jesus has revealed, and let it be enough to engage your belief, that he has said it. You believe that you are weak: let frequent daily prayer implore the guidance and strength of your God and Saviour, to attend you through the world, down to death, and up to

Thus live as a believer. And when a few more suns
 risen and set; when a few more days, and weeks, and
 is have rolled away; when you have suffered a few
 of the pains, and enjoyed a few more of the pleasures, of
 your days will be numbered, your time will be no
 , your farewell must be taken of earthly comfort, and
 freedom from earthly pain will be complete. Then will
 e what you now believe. Death, when it closes your
 pon this world, will open them on the next; there to
 that is now unseen, to know what is now unknown;
 o change faith for sight, and fleeting comforts for eter-
 e. Blessed are those servants that, when the last great
 e approaches, are found watching! Be not slothful, but
 wer of them who through faith and patience inherit the
 es. Persevere, is the direction of the Saviour; and let
 ate you to think that perseverance will not long be
 te. Let faith direct your thoughts to future scenes.
 he watchmen on the mountains of Judea, watching the
 limmerings of the moon, let faith look for its returning

In pleasing meditation, let faith descry the events of
 years, and tell us the language of his saints in distant

Ah! let it say to us, He comes—one star is blazing—
 mament is catching fire from its flames—He comes—
 htning spreads before him—again it spreads and turns
 ght darkness into awful day—He comes—the last trum-
 aks him near—He comes—let us go hence! let us leave
 ined world! this perishing creation! Ah! Saviour,
 rd, Guardian, Friend, and God! thus wilt thou come!
 ilt thou visit earth a second time! but we—ah we—
 ve wait those distant years! Ah no! long ere that time
 all who love thee here now, shall love and adore thee
 dwellings of unfading life.




CHAPTER V.

THE CHRISTIAN LIFE A LIFE OF PRAYER.

§ 1. **P**RAYER is a sacred privilege. By it the Christian maintains intercourse with his God and Savior. Prayer brings down numberless blessings upon man. It is the breath of the soul. It is the life of religion. A Christian cannot live without it. A corpse maintains for a while the form of man, but the spirit is fled, it is destitute of the form of religion may be assumed where the life is wanting. Without prayer it is a dead corpse; the breath, the spirit, are wanting. Religion begun leads to prayer. Of an awakened sinner, it may be said, as it was of St. Paul, he prayeth. Religion strengthens, matures, and closes its course below with prayer; and the dying believer breathes out his soul and his desires to the Father with Stephen's petition, Lord Jesus, receive my spirit.

§ 2. Consider the solemnity of prayer. The most serious change that will ever take place in our situation, is that which takes place by death: when we at once leave all the scenes of mortal life.



great God, who made heaven and earth. To him, we behold him not, we speak, and are as really in presence, as if death had dismissed us hence, and our spirits stood before him. You would not trifle in a hour; and if you feel aright the nature and solemnity of prayer, you will no more trifle in prayer than trifle in

the thought a little further. In prayer you speak—that awful God, whom you must shortly meet, with whom you must have a most solemn interview when a few moments have rolled away;—that God, in whose kingdom we rejoice ten thousand millions of ages hence, or whose presence you will then be lamenting as your bitterest curse. It is not the mere repetition of a few words, uttered by a mortal none can hear. The faintest whisper of real prayer goes beyond the limits of this world, and goes where we cannot at present fly; it enters the skies, and God hears it. Suppose you could discern the glory and majesty of him invisible, how would you pray then! While looking upon the throne of his glory, small would seem the value of our service in comparison of his love! Then what would our time appear! The sun, the moon, and stars glowing brightly, would vanish into nothing compared with him seated there! With eyes fixed on heaven, and hearts turned to the earth, overwhelmed with astonishment and awe, might we view the glory of that God whom we must meet. The splendours of eternal day might delight, the joys of blessed spirits enrapture, the astonished soul, but it would be the feelings these excited, compared with the springing from the view of his majesty, whose presence is the source of that glory, and the spring of that happiness! Could our thoughts and feelings could you gain a glimpse of his Majesty! Would you see the sun? ah, no! it would shine unseen. Would you look upon the stars, ah, no! its bustles and its tumults, its pleasures and pains, would pass unnoticed by. Suppose then, whenever you pray, you could quit the earthly port for a time, and enter the presence of this holy God, and presenting out your desires and thanksgivings before him, return to this world,—how solemnly would you enter presence, how fervently, yet with what awe, call upon his

name and bow at his footstool, and with what a thoughtful serious mind would you return from these interview business of life ! O consider, you have now as really to speak to God as you would then—as really to get presence, though clouds and darkness, and the veil of mortality, hide him from your view.

Another consideration that should add solemnity is, that it cannot be an indifferent thing. You came up from your knees as you knelt down. You have gained a blessing or incurred guilt. If offered through sincerity, the continuance of former blessings, or bestowment of new ones, is surely obtained. But in formal lip-service, it is a mockery of the divine. When you rise from prayer you must rise possessed in your, or labouring under the displeasure, of the Almighty.

§ 3. To have such impressions as these on your mind at the hour of prayer, is of no little moment ; for fervour, though the most inestimable of privileges, is often a duty. To repeat a few lifeless words is indeed an end, but to pray in sincerity a very different one. To turn the world aside ; to place ourselves as in the presence of God, surrounded by earthly things to forget all that is earth, far from heavenly scenes to have our hearts engage themselves ; to bow down as before the throne of the Most High to address an invisible God as if he were visible ; to engage our thoughts, our hearts, our desires engaged in his

yers. He introduces only one petition for earthly good, and that the most limited possible, "Give us this day our daily bread." Bread is what he tells us to implore, and that but one day at a time.

Earthly blessings should not be a leading subject in prayer. It is true you may pray for them, and for deliverance from temporal evils; for the most eminent saints did so. But for every thing of this kind you should pray with resignation and submission, leaving the subject after all to God; for time is short, and earthly good of little importance to one who has to live for ever. Besides, our own blindness should teach the necessity of praying humbly and conditionally for what we may deem earthly blessings. God sees more than we see, and may see that the very objects we most importunately desire, might be a source of ruin here or destruction hereafter. Rachel said, Give me children or I die! God granted her desires; she had children given her, and died through the grant. God may see the objects we desire would be a bitter curse; the troubles we deprecate our greatest blessing. Life, that desired object, the sorest of evils; death, that dreaded foe, the st of friends. We may desire life for ourselves or others, when we might see storms of affliction too heavy to be borne, and therefore send death to lay our bodies in the grave, at its silent abode, over which the tempests of life may pass, at which they never reach; and to conduct our spirits to that world, where

"Pains, and groans, and griefs, and fears,
"And death itself shall die."

For spiritual blessings you may pray without apprehension asking amiss. For them you may go *boldly* to the throne of grace. These are blessings, which it is for the glory of God to bestow, and for the good of man to receive. These are of everlasting importance, and everlasting worth. Whatever others pray for, when your heart rises to heaven, in solemn devotion, let your petitions chiefly relate to the glory of God and the honour of Christ. Pray that you may understand clearly, and believe firmly, the invaluable gospel; that you may discern the infinite evil of sin, and comprehend the love of Christ; that you may be cleansed from all sin in his atoning blood; that with full confidence you may rest your eternal all on him, as on the Rock of ages; that you may

obey his holy instructions, copy his spotless example, trust his sacred promises; that you may live on earth as who belongs to heaven; that swelling multitudes may travel with you to that happy world; that the divine Spirit may rest on them and you, and that at length you may enter a world where, all error and corruption being left behind, shall continue to eternity, praising, loving, admiring, adoring him that sits upon the throne, and the Lamb that was slain, and redeemed you to God by his blood.

To see that such should be the leading subjects of prayer, observe what is expressed in a few scriptural petitions.

"Hallowed be thy name." "Thy kingdom come." "Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven."^a Done *in* us, done *by* us, and done *with* us, and done as perfectly as cheerfully as it is done in heaven. "Pray that the word of the Lord may have free course and be glorified."^b "I pray that your love may abound yet more and more;"^c "That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye may know the love of Christ, which passes knowledge."^d "And the God of peace sanctify you wholly: and I pray God your whole spirit, and soul, and body, be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ."^e "Now the God of peace make you perfect in every good work to do his will."^f "The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost, be with you all."

is sufficient. If that were prayer, teach a parrot to repeat them, and a parrot could pray. Such were the prayers of old. "This people draw nigh unto me with mouth, and honour me with their lips, but their heart is from me."¹ Such are the prayers of myriads now. They ask for what they do not desire; beg for holiness and forgiveness, and mock God with their solemn requests; because their hearts join not sincerely in any petition that their lips

5. Prayer should be solemn and fervent. "The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much."² In the season of devotion we address that God whom we do not love enough, and implore blessings of everlasting immortality. At such a time reverence, humility, unfeigned sorrow for sin, earnest desire for blessings needed, and thanks for blessings possessed, cannot be called into exercise indifferently lively. Think of God, and what is man! What moment his life! What an insect himself! What an atom in the world on which he dwells! Before that God what humility should we feel! with what reverence adore! What deep abasement should we cherish, and what entire abhorrence of the dreadful ingratitude and hellish evil of sin committed against such a Friend! Then too should the immense, undiminished love of God call forth gratitude the most devout. We would cross the Atlantic ocean to save a fly perishing on the other side that ocean! Such love to a dying insect is no human breast. But the Son of God, at his Father's commandment, performed a miracle of mightier love. Man, created with him, is far more worthless than a fly compared with him. Yet, given by his Father, for us he left his heavenly dwelling, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. This "love of infinite degree," this "immutable grace," should ever be remembered in the hour of devotion. At such a season too there is every thing in our power to excite fervour. We speak to the God whose decision fixes our everlasting state; whose smile is life eternal, and whose frown eternal death. We ask him for blessings of all worth. How earnestly would a wretch condemned to hell implore the mercy of his judge, if he saw that judge melt with compassion over him. And can we in prayer feel

(1) Matt. xv. 8.

(2) James v. 16.

our state, and look forward to the solemn and decisive scenes of an endless world, and not be earnest?

§ 7. Prayer should be offered while exercising faith in your Redeemer's atonement and your heavenly Father's love. "What things soever ye desire when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them."¹ "If two of you shall agree on earth as touching any thing that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father which is in heaven. For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them."^m

It is true some or all of these passages have a peculiar and special reference to faith in God, enabling the apostles to perform miracles for the confirmation of the gospel; but while this is allowed there can be no reasonable doubt of the importance of the exercise of faith, in imploring the more common blessings of his providence and grace. The exercise of faith will add fervour, solemnity, and reverence to your devotions. You will then pray as seeing him who is invisible, and with the confidence of a child addressing a beloved and loving father. And to all Christians it is said, "If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him. But let him ask in faith."ⁿ

...table prayer must be connected the ex
...position. As an impo


we are taught to ask for that measure of forgiveness we exercise. Forgive *as* we forgive. It is obvious, a person using this petition who does not forgive others, asks God not to forgive him, and thus implores a curse of a blessing. And this the Son of God has solemnly said the unforgiving worshipper will bring down on himself: as he does not forgive he shall not be forgiven.

Prayer should also be persevering. "Be careful (full) for nothing, but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God." "Continuing instant in prayer." The Lord taught perseverance in prayer by two instructive parables. The blessings you solicit may not immediately be granted, yet still pray, and if they are really blessings, depend on God at length will hear. He may see it wise and expedient to exercise your faith and patience, by delaying mercies and favours to bestow; still, therefore, pray. Let not delay or discouragements damp your earnestness. "Wait on the Lord and be of good courage, and he will strengthen thine

Prayer should be constant. "Pray without ceasing. In every thing give thanks." "Watch ye, therefore, and pray always." At every suitable opportunity; on every season, and at other times, having the heart kept in a holy frame. This may be called praying always, praying without ceasing, in the same way as the sacrifice that was re-offered every morning and evening in the temple, was the perpetual sacrifice. Those prayers which are only by fits and starts, proceed not from a heart reconciled to God. When any alarming danger threatens to overwhelm many, who never otherwise think of prayer, profess to pray. The profligate, or the man of the world, languishing at he thinks his last hours, begins to pray; but let him return, and the profligate forgets his promises, his duties, and his vows. Can such prayers be heard in heaven? Prayer should be a stated employment of part of every day. In these seasons should be appointed, must partly depend on the situation and circumstances in which persons are placed. The Psalmist appears to have had *seven* such

hil. iv. 6. (r) Rom. xii. 12. (u) Luke xviii. 1-8. xi. 5-8.
 v) Ps. xxvii. 14. (w) 1 Thess. v. 17. (x) Luke xxi. 35.

stated seasons daily ; Daniel had *three* of them. Many lovers of Jesus Christ should not have less ; but none who wish to walk with God should have less than two ; one in the morning, and the other in the evening, of every day. To begin the day with God is unspeakably important. Even at night we are preserved by his care ; his eye, which never sleeps, watches over us, while we are insensible to all that may surround us. This goodness calls for every morning praise. The day, with its snares and avocations, is then before us, and his help is needed to enable us that day to do the Christian's part, and his grace to prepare us for an eternal day above. Prayer should be the first employment ; because when just risen from repose, the mind is not distracted by perplexities and cares, as it is when it has been occupied a while with the cares of the day. Let the first half hour possible the first hour of the day, be consecrated to reading the Scriptures, meditation, and prayer ; and this will prepare you for the following employments of the day ; will help you to walk with God, and strengthen you to meet the temptations or troubles that may beset your path. Of the pious Colonel Gardiner, who is stated to have attained such fervency in prayer as few have equalled, and whose life was rendered eminently happy by religion, it is recorded, that he devoted two hours to religious exercises every morning : when business called for his attention by four o'clock he would



ease to be a habit. You cannot reasonably expect any spiritual blessing on a day begun without prayer. It will probably be a day of sin; it must, if you have proper feeling, be a day of uneasiness. Nor would you like to die some night, when you had lain down to sleep without communing with your God. O would you pray successfully, pray steadily. Besides, such stated seasons for prayer cherish that frame of mind which is adapted to prayer; and you will find many intervals from business, and many circumstances, in which you may and will lift up your heart unto God.

§ 11. It may assist you in offering your private addresses to God to remember, that every thing like a solicitous attention to language, or matter, is then utterly needless—God who sees your heart knows your meaning, and the broken language of a humble heart is acceptable to him; while studied eloquence in prayer is contemptible indeed. Pray to him as your heavenly Father: speak to him from your heart, and God will hear. If any rule is necessary to direct you how thus to pour out your desires before God, it is comprised in one word—*meditation*. Think of the greatness and majesty of God, and you will learn how to praise him. Think of his goodness, and you will learn to bless him. Meditate on your obligations to him; the numerous mercies you enjoy, the needful gifts of providence, and the means of grace, the word of life, the great Redeemer, and the hope of glory; and you will surely know how to thank him. Review your life, reflect on your sins, your sinfulness, and ingratitude, and you will learn how to confess your offences to him. Meditate on your wants, your weakness, and imperfections, the love of Christ, the value of your soul, and the nearness of eternity, and this will teach you how to pray for everlasting blessings. Look by faith into the eternal world, listen to your Redeemer's promises, and think of being for ever with him in a better state, and you will not need the language of others to express your earnest desires to be his humble follower here, and his glorified disciple there. A child knows how to ask favours from an affectionate parent, and needs no form composed by others; and shall not a child of God acquire the same facility in speaking to his heavenly Father? What if, when first starting in the Christian course, he found a devout form adapted to cherish the flame of devotion, yet, when accustomed to the

worship of the closet, habituated to communion with God, should he not indulge the spirit of a child, who knows that even his broken accents are welcome to his Father's ear?

§ 12. There is one requisite more of essential importance to successful and acceptable prayer—that it be offered in the Saviour's name. “Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father *in my name* he will give it you. At that day ye shall ask *in my name*. Ask and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full.” To ask a favour in another's name, is to present our petition, relying for success upon the influence of the friend, whose name we are permitted to use.

Jesus Christ is in heaven, ever living to intercede for his friends, as their advocate there. And when they pray in his name, they ask as his friends, relying on his intercession, and expecting success on his account. His sufferings, his merits, and his intercession, are the ground of their acceptance. In themselves there is nothing that can add weight to their prayers, but going in his name the Father hears and blesses them for Jesus's sake. Ever pray in the name of Jesus.

§ 13. The observations already made, have been designed principally in reference to private devotion; but, as the house of God is the beloved spot to which religion often leads its friends, a remark may be introduced on public devotion. Be as solicitous to realize the presence of God, when surrounded by a crowd of fellow-worshippers, as when no eye but that

ves, or as if he were speaking to them instead of addressing God. But this is not devotion; though only when the preacher addresses them, if they expect any benefit he speaks to God they must be humble worshippers pouring out the desires and confessions of their hearts to the throne of God. In all devotion, pray as on the throne of eternity. Closing the eyes during the time of prayer, will frequently assist a worshipper in maintaining seriousness and abstraction from the world which demands; and when it is found to do this, it becomes an important duty.


Perhaps, you are attached to the liturgy, and think that the whole of a congregation should unite in praying aloud. Be so, still consider that the remarks just made apply to the most solemn and impressive parts of that liturgy which the minister singly repeats. And where all unite, each sincere worshipper should do so with as much seriousness and solemnity, as if he were privately praying alone. It is to repeat again and again the same words, unless when they come from the heart: if the heart is not with the lips, the chattering of a magpie, or the rumbling of a carriage, is as acceptable to God as the most devout form of prayer that can be imagined; nay, more acceptable, for the magpie's chattering is not a mockery of his Maker; but he is insulted by the solemn chatterings of the worshipper. The more devotion the form used, the more dreadful is the mockery when the heart goes to one thing and the lips another.

Some weight is to be attached to the posture in which we worship. Where places of worship are so constructed as to limit with comfort of kneeling, that appears the most natural; but kneeling or standing are both devout and natural: sitting is decidedly *irreverent* and *improper*, where weakness and indisposition require it; then, in his sight who loves mercy better than sacrifice; otherwise it appears like treating the infinite Jehovah with less reverence than we should use in addressing an ant fellow-worm. What suppliant would sit carelessly before presenting a petition to the king of Great Britain? so that feels reverence for the eternal Kings of kings.

can needlessly indulge that careless, slothful posture speaking to him ?

§ 15. Connected with prayer is praise. Many of the observations made already respecting prayer, apply equally to this sacred, and to a grateful heart delightful, part of worship. The wants of man call for prayer ; the glory of God demands praise. Many Christians, who pray, are comparatively forgetful of praise. This springs from looking at their wants more than at their mercies, or from want of grateful feelings for the blessings with which their years are crowned. The sacred Scriptures, which contain many directions respecting prayer, also abound with directions respecting praise. A considerable portion of the Psalms is praise ; and exhortations are frequently given to present this grateful offering to the Most High : “ Sing unto the Lord, O ye saints of his, and give thanks at the remembrance of his holiness.”^a “ Praise is comely for the upright.”^b “ Offer unto God thanksgiving.”^b “ In every thing give thanks ; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you.”^c

§ 16. In many congregations, singing constitutes a considerable part of public worship. This sacred exercise should ever be conducted in the spirit of humble devotion. It is frequently an address to God, and always connected with religious subjects. Perhaps, in few ways is God more insulted than by *hymns sung without devotion*. Much sin is thus



ing hymns descriptive of the feelings of the heart, it is needful to observe how far the feelings of our own hearts accord with the hymn ; lest we should be guilty of uttering any thing approaching the nature of a solemn falsehood, in the presence of the Most High. Keep in view the apostle's words, I will sing with the spirit and with the understanding.*


While so much attention should be paid to the spirit with which hymns are sung, the posture also deserves attention. Where weakness or indisposition do not require a sitting posture, has it not a very undevout and irreverent appearance to see a congregation lolling carelessly at their ease, while uniting in the worship of God ? The hosts of heaven are represented as behaving to their Creator in a more reverent manner.^f The happy multitude^g which John saw in vision, and whose *song of praise* was, "Salvation to our God which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb," stood before the throne. A devout posture ought to be connected with a devout spirit.

§ 17. Your present welfare and eternal happiness greatly depend on a strict attention to prayer. Its value will never be fully known, till that day when an end shall be put to every hope that is not eternal. Then, when the sepulchres of brass and marble melt away, the pyramids of brick and stone moulder back to dust ; when humble cottages and gorgeous palaces, little villages and mighty cities, fruitful plains and barren deserts, lowly vaileys and lofty mountains, and the world itself shall be weltering in final flames ;—then when the solemnities of eternal judgment commence—proceed—conclude—and all have entered their unchangeable abodes ;—then, and not till then, will the value of devout intercourse with God be fully known. O, keep those scenes in view ! and no earthly pleasure, no earthly care, will lead you to neglect communion with your heavenly Father.

§ 18. To increase your sense of its value, observe the importance attached to prayer by the example, and in the life, of the Lord Jesus Christ. His life below was a life of devotion ; and events of peculiar importance were accompanied with a peculiar attention to prayer. When the holy Jesus was baptized he prayed.^h Before he chose his twelve apos-

(*) 1 Cor. xiv. 15. (f) Dan. vii. 10. (g) Rev. vii. 9 ; Rev. xv. 2.
(h) Luke iii. 21.

bles he went out into a mountain to pray.¹ Before his transfiguration he took James and John and Peter apart into a high mountain, for the same sacred exercise.^k When he stood by the grave of Lazarus he lifted up his eyes to heaven, and thanked his Father for hearing him.^l When certain Gentiles desired to see him, after speaking of the effect of his sufferings, he prayed, "Father, glorify thy name."^m After working many miracles, on one occasion he rose in the morning a great while before day, and went into a solitary place and prayed.ⁿ At another time, when he had healed great multitudes, he withdrew into the wilderness and prayed.^o When he had fed five thousand with five loaves and two fishes, he sent away the multitude, and went up into a mountain apart to pray, and when the evening was come he was there alone.^p When he foresaw Peter's temptation, he prayed for him that his faith should not fail.^q He closed the solemnities of his last supper with an affecting prayer. For those who crucified him he prayed, "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do."^r And on the cross, before he expired, he addressed God, saying, "Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit."^s As thus on every solemn occasion prayer expressed the feelings of his heart, so he *persevered* in prayer. When he went out into a mountain to pray, before he chose the twelve, he continued all night in prayer to God.^t And after feeding the multitude with a few loaves, and retiring for



prayer, or rising for that sacred exercise before the first glimmering of the dawn. See this, and learn of him. Leave the bed of sloth to commune with your God. And when called to engage in duties of peculiar weight, then, like the Lord, watch unto prayer. Amidst the silence of midnight, or before the dawn glimmers in the heavens, let your prayers and your praises be ascending to God.

§ 19. The value of prayer, and the strongest encouragement for it, appears in the numerous promises made to it, with which the Scriptures abound. "They that seek the Lord shall not want any good."^u "The eyes of the Lord are upon the righteous, and his ears are open unto their cry." "Call upon me in the day of trouble; I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify me."^v "The Lord is nigh unto all them that call upon him, to all that call upon him in truth. He will fulfil the desire of them that fear him; he also will hear their cry, and will save them."^w "Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you: for every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened.—If ye, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father which is in heaven give good things to them that ask him?"^x "If ye shall ask any thing in my name, I will do it."^y "If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you."^z

These are a few of the numerous promises made to prayer. How precious are the blessings promised! If solid holiness and real peace in life, if comfort or triumph in death, and the love of God through a whole eternity, are important to you, then is prayer unspeakably important; for all the grace that makes the deathless soul a partaker of these blessings, is promised in answer to sincere, humble, fervent prayer; and it is given. All who truly pray obtain these blessings, and none possess them who live a prayerless life.

§ 20. The blessings that have been granted to prayer illustrate its importance and its worth. The records of religious history abundantly prove, that God is the hearer of prayer; and this not only on subjects of great magnitude, but on those

(u) Ps. xxxiv. 10.

(v) Matt. vii. 7–11.

(w) Ps. l. 14, 15.

(y) John xiv. 13, 14.

(x) Ps. cxlv. 18, 19.

(z) John xv. 7.

of real, though of less, moment. Abraham prayed for Isaac, and if ten righteous persons could have been found in Sodom, he would have spared that guilty city.^a Abraham's servant sent to obtain a suitable wife for Isaac, prayed to God for direction, and was guided to the lovely Rebecca.^b Jacob, alarmed at Esau's approach, in his distress prayed for help, and prevailed, and Esau became his friend.^c Moses prayed that the plagues might be removed from Egypt, and they were removed; again and again he implored mercy for the rebellious and backsliding Israel, and Israel was spared, even when God had proposed to exterminate the guilty race.^d Hannah, humiliated by a rival wife, prayed to the friend of the distressed, and he answered her prayer, and she became the mother of a son.^e When Israel was oppressed by the Philistines, Samuel prayed, and those invaders were scattered and fled.^f "Elijah," says the apostle, "was less to correct and reform a murderous, idolatrous nation, than to pray earnestly that it might not rain, and it rained not for the space of three years and six months; he prayed again, and the heavens gave rain, and the earth brought forth her fruit."^g On another occasion, when vindictive heathens dishonoured his God, he prayed, and fire descended from heaven, and consumed the sacrifice he was offering, the altar of wood, and the stones, and the water that was in the laver around the altar; while the astonished idolatrous heathens cried out "The Lord he is God, the Lord he is God." ^h Hezekiah, near to death, prayed, and fifteen years were added to his life.ⁱ His country was invaded by Sennacherib;

place where they were assembled was shaken, they were filled with the Holy Ghost, and spake with the boldness they desired.^o Peter was imprisoned by Herod. The church of God prayed without ceasing for his deliverance, and their prayer was more powerful than chains, and bars, and bolts, and prison doors, and military guards. While they prayed, God heard. An angel descended, and liberated Peter, and he himself became to those who were praying for him the messenger of his own deliverance.^p Cornelius, the devout Gentile, prayed, and an apostle was divinely instructed to go and preach the gospel to him.^q Paul and Silas were imprisoned at Philippi; shut in the inner prison, and fast in the stocks. They prayed, and an earthquake shook the prison to its foundations; and all its doors were opened, and every one's bands were loosed.^r Such are some of the memorable instances of the success of prayer recorded in the sacred pages. Truly, when viewing them, we may exclaim, "Prayer moves the hand that moves the world."

§ 21. Few that are acquainted with the grace of God, are unacquainted with the efficacy of prayer. Mr. Baxter* ob-

(o) Acts iv. 29—31.

(p) Acts xii.

(q) Acts x.

(r) Acts xvi.

* This great and good man, in his *Life and Times*, relates various instances of the success of prayer, and among them the following:

Richard Cook, a pious man, during Mr. Baxter's residence at Kidderminster, went to live in the next house to him. After some time he was seized with melancholy, which ended in madness. The most skilful help was obtained, at all in vain. While he was in this state, some pious persons wished to meet, and fast and pray in behalf of the sufferer; but Mr. Baxter in this instance dissuaged them, as he apprehended the case to be hopeless, and thought they could expose prayer to contempt in the eyes of worldly persons, when they saw it unsuccessful. When ten or a dozen years of affliction had passed over Richard Cook, some of the pious men referred to would no longer be dissuaded, and would fast and pray at his house. They continued this practice once a fortnight for several months; at length the sufferer began to amend, his health and reason returned, and, says Mr. Baxter, "is now as well almost as ever he was, and so hath continued for a considerable time." *Baxter's Life and Times*, ii. p. 81.

The amiable and pious Mrs. Rowe is stated, on respectable authority, to have had a sister distinguished for early loveliness, of whose death the following remarkable account was given by Mrs. Rowe:

"It was in my sister's death," said Mrs. Rowe, when giving the account, that my father was to be tried; but it was I that was taken sick, and when the physicians let them know my great danger, this dear sister came to me with a visible concern, and earnestly besought me to tell her whether I was sady and willing to die; for she was afraid I should die, and she could not comfortably part with me but to go to Christ; she hoped, therefore, that my interest in him was comfortable and clear. I earnestly turned to her, and said,

"Why, sister, do they think me in such hazard? I must confess to you that my distress would be great, on account of my soul, if I thought my death were now coming; for I have not that full assurance of my interest in Christ, which I have always begged of God I might have before he pleases to call me hence." No sooner had she heard me say this, than she fell, as in agony, on her knees by my bedside, and in a manner inexpressible for fervour and humility, besought the Lord, that if her father must have the grief of burying

serves on this subject, "How many times have I known the prayer of faith to save the sick, when all physicians have given them up for dead! It hath been my own case more than once or twice, or ten times; when means have all failed, yet have I been relieved by the prevalency of fervent prayer."*

§ 22. The willingness of the Father to hear prayer, and the intercession of Christ in behalf of his followers, combine to illustrate the value of this sacred exercise. The Lord said, "At that day ye shall ask in my name, and I say not unto you, that I will pray the Father for you; for the Father himself loveth you, because ye have loved me."† As much as to say, If I did not intercede at all for you, yet such is the Father's great love to you, that he will grant you what you ask in my name. But though this is the case, still the Saviour

one of his children, it might be her! for through his free grace, and to the glory of it, she could joyfully profess before him her assured hope of her interest in his everlasting mercy, through Jesus Christ! wherefore she could willingly surrender herself to die, if it might please God to grant her sister a further space for making her calling and election sure. Having prayed thus, in a transport the most surprising and astonishing to me, said Mrs. Rowe, 'she earnestly kissed me and left the room, without giving me time or power to answer her a word; and what is almost incredible to relate, from that hour or two, I grew better and recovered, but she took to her bed and died in a few days.'

This statement is contained in a letter from Mr Benjamin Coleman, a minister at Boston, New England, to Dr. Watts: the letter is dated May, 1739. He states, that after the conversation in which Mrs. Rowe related this remarkable event, he wrote down the particulars, and kept the record by him. In a subsequent letter he refers to it, as a story from Mrs. Rowe's own mouth.—*Watts's Life, prefixed to the third volume of his Practical Works*, pp. 99—101.

A few years ago, the writer of these pages heard the following narrative



pleads as the advocate of his friends. "We have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous." "Seeing then that we have a great High Priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession. Let us come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need."^a "Through him we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father."^v

What strong encouragement for prayer! The eternal Father willing to hear our requests, the Son of God, by his intercession, adding weight to every devout petition, and efficacy to every suitable desire; to all this the aids of the divine Spirit are added. How precious is prayer thus sanctioned! How wonderful the love of God that gives us such encouragement!

§ 23. You may discern the worth of devotion by glancing at its happy effects upon the truly devout. Prayer promotes their piety, is their solace in affliction, their safeguard in prosperity. True devotion trains the soul for heaven; it raises the Christian's views and desires above the grovelling objects of a dying world. When the soul is elevated in fervent prayer, it flies over earth and time, and seeks something more worthy of its affection than any sublunary object. Then, for a few happy moments, the Christian looks down on earth, and deems its sufferings and its joys equally trifling, and equally unworthy of regard. A frail, unstable world is not, then, the world for him. All beneath the sun is too mean and worthless for the soul, that is engaged in contemplating the glories of its future home, and in communing with its heavenly friends. Life appears but a dream, and time itself but a little insignificant span, when in the season of devotion the heart sinks or exults in the view of eternity. Objects that, at other times, we may eagerly pursue, then appear so sunk in value, that we may almost wonder why we should have ever attached importance to them, while we fear lest, when the elevations of devotion are passed, we should be as infatuated again. The contentions and bustles of jarring nations, important as the world may think them, then seem very unimportant to those who can say, My soul, thou art not of this world, what are these to thee?

Thus prayer raises the soul above the world, and endows

(v) 1 John ii. 1.

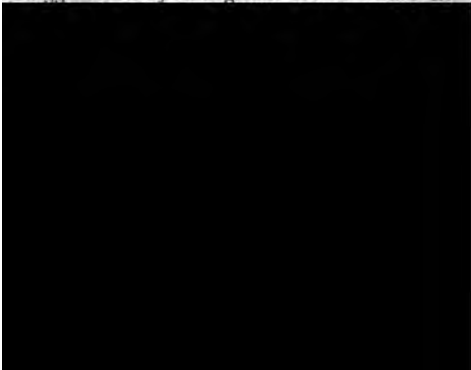
(u) Heb. iv. 14—16.

(v) Eph. ii. 18.

the humble worshipper with steady fortitude to press to heaven, though ten thousand dangers should be way. In prayer

"His hand the Christian fastens on the skies,
"And bids earth roll, nor feels its idle wind."

The feeling cherished by prayer, that God is our necessarily produces this effect. When cheered with of Omnipotence engaged for him, the Christian can enemies, the fiercest and most mighty, "Do your ut are but wretched mortals; my Father can in an in concert all your schemes, baffle your plans, and in power weakness, and your bodies dust; and if he do it is because he permits you to go on, that you may sovereign will. I fear you not. He laughs at y power, and I am secure in his omnipotence." So thought, so martyrs acted. The vivifying prosper kingdom of God, which cheers the moments of devot make us blind to every obstacle, and lead us to pres like men, who see no dangers though beset all ro them, because they see nothing but that one object, their eyes are intently fixed. A thought or a glim native land, his friends and his home, may urge the worn out with fatigue, and resigning himself and his the rage of the tempest, to contend with the wave struggle for safety with greater ardour than ever.



" They cannot lose their chief support, whose principal happiness springs from God as their Father, Jesus as their Saviour and Intercessor, and immortality as their future portion.

the world take away what it will, it cannot take from a heart that will converse with God as long as the pulse of life shall beat.—Let the world deprive me, may be the language of the Christian, of all its blessings and satisfactions; it take from me relatives and friends; let it load me with calamity and suffering, or deprive me of liberty: these things it may do, but it cannot take from me the comforts of prayer; cannot take away death, that shall dismiss me ere long to a nobler worship and better enjoyments above.

25. That which is the solace of adversity, is the Christian's safeguard in prosperity. When earthly comforts and sensible delights surround us, we are tempted to forget, that time for these things will soon be no longer.—A hedge of thorns, or of sweetbriars, may hide the loveliest prospects from our view; so do the concerns and delights of life hide the sweet visions of immortality. But when we retire from the world, things unseen again appear before our souls. Then we see the vanity of all below the sun; see that prosperity is but a snare, that would tempt us to destruction. Then we may learn to pray—O save us from the snares we dread! Save us from a world as deceitful as it is attractive! and let not its momentary shadows of happiness deprive us of the everlasting substance! Blessed Jesus! however allured, let us not love a world that murdered thee! nor seek our portion where thou art but a pilgrim and a stranger!

Thus, whatever be your lot, devotion will lessen its evils, and add to its comforts. The more spiritual and fervent it is, the more gladness will it diffuse through the heart. "Even tears of penitential sorrow and contrition, or of sympathy and benevolence, into which a devout person may sometimes be melted, have a sweetness in them not to be expressed, and more to be desired than the greatest joys of the irreligious."

26. There are other considerations that should endear our present lot. Think of its ennobling nature. Christians, even while on earth, belong to a better world.—They and the angels, who are gone to rest, and angels, those bright natives of heaven, are all parts of the same family, of which some

have never been separated from their home, others have finished the wandering journey of life have reached it, the remainder are bound to it, and will soon reach it. But while a part continues here, prayer is the chief employment in which they can resemble their brethren in glory there not something pleasing in such a reflection : " When I am on my knees I am imitating angels. Devotion, if not prayer, yet by praise, is the delightful work of the blessed in heaven. I adore the same God as they, bow before the throne, and claim the same Father. Surrounded with trials that hasten to decay, and often engaged with cares and anxieties that must quickly end for ever, I am now, like the angels of heaven, occupied by devotion, and doing what I shall do with increasing fervour and delight, when all the other enjoyments and joys of life perish together, and what I still find a source of the purest happiness, ten thousand years and ages after they are all forgotten." O, how does a knowledge of Jesus and devotion exalt the meanest ! We know indeed what we shall be. Look at a poor but pious labourer digging a ditch, or mending a hedge, or wearied with plough, the sickle, or the scythe. Mean as his occupations seem, yet he is sometimes employed as angels delight to do and worships the same God as they. O how changed he soon appear ! In a very few years death will dismiss him to the rest he seeks. Illiterate now, he shall then obtain knowledge, that compared with him the wisest men will be but simple babes. Mean now, a wearied, worn-out, and withered man, he will then put on a heavenly form, bask with angels in the realms of bliss, and shine as the sun in the kingdom of his Father. Look at a child, occupied with harmless and healthful amusements of childhood. Has the child learned to pray in sincerity ? If he has, though he does not vie with the hosts of heaven in the perfection of his devotions, he vies with them in this respect, that he engages in the same work as they. Indeed, if we seriously reflect, it may be a wonder to ourselves : to look at the middle-aged and the old engaged in such trifling cares as those of the world, and the young in such fleeting amusements, and then to think that these are all immortal creatures ; these all may engage, on earth, in the employments of heaven ; and those of whom we are told who are found in Jesus, shall soon be translated to the

be blessed ! O, when we do this, we may exclaim, al are thy works, Lord God Almighty ! Unsearch- he counsels of thy love !


Besides all this, in sincere devotion we claim a still nnexion. Jesus said, When ye pray, say, Our Fa- art in heaven :—what an encouragement for prayer ! er *in heaven* : the High and Lofty One, who in- ernity—yet still our Father. Though Jesus's death ng believer's only hope, yet, how happily will this in- ith God tend to tranquillize the soul, when soul and about to part. Not in the last hurrying, languishing, g hour, in doubt and darkness, wistfully to look reading the solemn scenes just opening on the sight ; i composure and calmness, to think, I am going to er ; my Father, to whom, through Jesus, I have so d access ; with whom I have so often conversed affected fervour ; who has heard my prayers, and guard, my guide, and my strength ; who has been while I lived on earth, and who now is taking me rith himself in heaven. Happy are they who, like is gone to rest, can say, If I live God will be with if I die I shall be with him. And who are they ? areless and the formal ; but the humble, prayerful, ollowers of the Lamb ; to whom prayer has been as us food, and than that more prized.

To these considerations shall I add one more, of a on opposite to the former ? God has not promised a essing in this world, or the next, to those who do not ndeed, many prayerless persons enjoy numerous tem- rcies ; God makes his sun rise and his rain descend, ust and on the unjust also ; but, irreligion changes se blessings into curses : the more mercies, the more xause the more ingratitude in slighting the Giver of rcies. At the great day of account, it will be found ing to have requited God with ingratitude for a hun- ssings, but worse to have done so for a thousand ; to have wasted one talent, worse to have wasted five.

of no heavier punishment which God can inflict in ld on the prayerless, who, insensible of his goodness, t their hearts to him, than to heap fresh favours on ad to *lengthen out* their time for enjoying these fa-

vours ; that thus they may fill up the measure of their iniquities. Search, then, the Bible through, and you will not find one real blessing, that can prove such to a person that continues to live in a prayerless state. Nor can religion possibly exist without prayer. Those words, so encouraging to the Christian, " Ask, and ye shall receive,"^w may strongly imply, that if you ask not, you shall *not* receive ; if you seek not, you shall not find. Many have ascribed their ruin, for time and eternity, to the neglect of prayer. They asked not, and so they did not receive. A poor murderer, who was executed for his crime, in his last moments said, " Oh, if I had gone to prayer that morning when I committed the sin for which I am now to die, O Lord God, I believe thou wouldst have kept back my hands from that sin."

The writer, who states this fact, mentions another, displaying, not merely the awful effects of neglecting prayer, but the bitter consequences of growing weary of it, because a favourite object was not granted. An aged person, who had been many years a well-esteemed member of the church, at length became a drunkard, and was excommunicated, and died in awful circumstances. Some of his dying words were these : " ' I often prayed unto God for a mercy, which he still denied me. At length I grew angry at God ; whereupon, I grew slack in my acquaintance with the Lord : ever since which he hath dreadfully forsaken me ; and I know that now he



ers as yours are worse than nothing : you had better not at all, than pray as you do."—Ah, look on this temptation as one that proceeds from your great enemy. If you ever yield to it, you will soon perceive it answers his designs ; your soul will grow more dead ; prayer still more a burthen. Instead of your state mending by this neglect, it will grow worse ; your heart less and less disposed for prayer, and the use of your mind less and less suited to it. Pray, then, and continue instant in prayer. Pray, though the world with its pleasures would hinder you. Pray, though the devil with a host of temptations would prevent you. Still pray, and God will bless you. And when unable to pray as you *would*, still pray as you *can* ; and pray for help to pray better. Pursue this course ; cleave to the great Intercessor ; and in a little while, in a brighter world, prayer shall be rewarded for endless praise ;

" While sweet remembrance calls to mind
 " The scenes of mortal care ;
 " When God, your God, for ever kind,
 " Was present to your PRAYER."

CHAPTER VI.

2. CHRISTIAN A PILGRIM UPON EARTH, AND A MEMBER OF THE FAMILY OF GOD.

AN important and pleasing view of the Christian's state and character, is that of a traveller to a better world. A pleasing English poet has said,

" Turn, pilgrim, turn, thy cares forego,
 " All earth-born care is wrong ;
 " Man wants but little here below,
 " Nor wants that little long."

The Scriptures describe life as a pilgrimage, and the child of God as a traveller to a lasting home. " I am a stranger in thee, and a sojourner, as all my fathers were." ^a " When

(a) Ps. xxxix. 13, 5.

a few years are come, then I shall go the way whence I shall not return.”^b The aged patriarch, Jacob, said, “The days of the years of my pilgrimage are a hundred and thirty years: few and evil have the days of the years of my life been.”^c Of him, and those who lived much longer than he it is said, that they “confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth; they desire a better country, that is, heavenly: wherefore, God is not ashamed to be called their God; for he hath prepared for them a city.”^d

Cherish the views these holy men professed. You, if Christian indeed, are but a traveller here. *Childhood and youth*, said Solomon, *are vanity*, and so are manhood and declining age. They are all parts of the same little journey of which some may, and others must, be near its close. In fancy, childhood, youth, manhood, and age, succeed each other so rapidly, that many scarcely reflect they are in one before they find themselves advanced to another. Trifling do fifteen, twenty, thirty years appear to those who can look backward on them, and equally trifling would seventy, eighty or an hundred seem when gone for ever. A poor man, who had spent more than seventy years on earth, once observed to me, that his time seemed but like two or three weeks. Ye life is a pilgrimage, and short is the passage from the cradle to the tomb: some find it a longer, some a shorter, but all short and hasty journey. It is hasty, though its haste be unperceived. A traveller in a packet, driven by steam and tied down the smooth surface of the Thames, may indulge the illusion that all he sees on shore, the trees, the spires, the villages, are in rapid motion, hurrying away; but it is he who moves, and all on shore is still. Thus, even when least sensible of the speed with which you go, are you advancing with sure and rapid haste to the eternal world. Think when you lie down, think when you rise up, think when you walk and think when you rest, I am but a traveller here. Amid the cares of life, remember these are but the cares of a journey amid its pleasures, these are but the comforts of an inn. The world is not my world; for I am but a traveller here.

Would you deepen the impression,

§ 2. *Think of those who are gone. The great and noble, who once turned the world upside down—what are they? why*

(b) Job xvi. 22.

(c) Gen. xlvii. 9.

(d) Heb. xi. 13–15.

now? Those who abounded in riches, or revelled in —where are they? and what is theirs? The moment they breathed their last, riches, pleasures, pomps, and vanities all. “Those lying vanities of life; that fleeting, ever-cheating train,” what are they to those whose journey to eternity is finished? Their life is ended; their life is valued no longer. What one day they thought they had resigned for the world, the next is snatched from them, and they are consigned over to the dark and silent grave. What is then to them the value of all they have most loved and prized? And what, O my soul! will be the value to thee, of all that is now most dear below? A moment since they were warm with life, gay with pleasures, or perplexed with plans and cares, and these are finished for ever. Then they were like me, I must I follow them, and be on an equality once

think of the living: look at the multitudes that crowd our town, or busy city; and when evening comes, that all the numbers you have seen in the day, in fifty years, a very few perhaps a little more, but the rest a great deal less, will have left this world for ever, or ever fixed in another. All their business brought to a final close. All their transient griefs and joys ended. No longer traversing the streets, hurried with business and distracted with business; no longer concerned with the varying changes and commotions of the world, the nations that rise or that fall; but silent in the dust. What could you revisit those now crowded streets when hundred years are passed, if no new generation arose, you would find them entirely deserted; not a single passenger in the street, nor an inhabitant in the houses; but the streets, where of grass is never seen, then covered with it; the walls falling into ruin; many of them already in the dust; the towers of the desert building their nests in the deserted and foxes, half hid with grass and nettles, peeping through the shattered windows. The houses of divine worshippers forsaken; every preacher gone from his pulpit; every congregation vanished and forgotten in the dust; as silent as the midst of an Arabian desert, or as the

chambers of the grave. O, act as a stranger and in so vain a world!

§ 4. Or view the subject, by indulging pen on the transient nature of all the most endearments. Think with yourself, Could I rise from the year two thousand comes, and look around I shall then have so long forsaken, what a scene would it present to me! Not those only whom I fore me, but all I left would have followed me. I should approach their now cheerful hearths, I should walk their gardens or their fields, I should be there; go to their tombs, and even there would a wretched trace be found, nor even a stone remain they had ever been. Had not others arisen, death, for ever undisturbed, would reign around them, and the desolation of the grave. Then where once with them I walked, review the scene I knew, rest on the spot where once with them the hills we climbed.—Alas, dear companions! you fled? The silent stars that we often together would shine, still have continued shining, but left me a solitary world. And do we think this will Oh, vain deceiving world! Oh, trifling, cheat cannot the dying generations of six thousand years away, impress the heart with the feeling, the continuing city here?

§ 5. When you mark the silence of midnight around you is as calm “as if the general pulse still;” let that solemn stillness, that impressive you to contemplate the period, when all the noise and business, that have harassed the world for all sand years, shall have ended for ever. A deep then fill the universe. Creation will lie dead no longer existing. No stars glittering in an but their blaze extinguished for ever. Oh, could then wander from its eternal dwelling, to witness how impressive would be the stillness! how did *that would* overspread the space once occupied *agitated world*, when this world is vanished for *might such* a wanderer think, here once rev

world, on which I travelled through the span of mortal life ; world, through many thousand years filled with successive generations or busy multitudes, that were perplexed with its cares, as if its cares were eternal, and delighted with its joys, as if its joys would never end.—How has it vanished ! How have its short-lived multitudes departed ! Their business over, their little pleasures finished, their hasty sorrows ended ! Their time pronounced, their endless dwelling fixed, and their merry gay, distracting, perplexing world—lost ! vanished ! gone forever ! O, vain world, that so soon must be no more ! that soon must give place to eternal solitude and stillness, where is multitude and bustle now ! How vain are the honours, wealth, and estates of such a world ! Its wealth cannot enrich ; its applause cannot long exalt. Let its admirers possess of honours and fame, that will last as long as the sun will shine or the world endure.—Alas, contemptible honours ! that will endure for so contemptible a span !—The sun is but a lamp, that lights our pathway to an endless world. The earth is but the road, prepared for pilgrims to travel over, till the eternal abodes of grief or bliss, they reach an endless home. The joy that fades, is below the eager pursuit of an immortal creature. The crown that will perish in the last universal fire ; the garland of honour that must wither in that fire ; are not worthy of one anxious thought from a creature destined to everlasting scenes. Those things which are not eternal ; they will not deceive you. What you now possess, you must soon see no more ; but, what you soon will see, you must see for ever. It is but as a moment, as an inch of time ; or as the darting of an arrow, or as the falling of a star, or as the twinkling of an eye, or as the glancing of a thought ; nay, compared with eternity, it is but as something less than these ; less than a moment, shorter than an inch, swifter than an arrow or a falling star, quicker than the twinkling of an eye or the glancing of thought, before all, which you now behold, shall pass away from you as a dream when one awakes, and give place to those eternal scenes. Then, farewell earth ! farewell sun, moon, and stars ! farewell a busy or an idle, a sad or a pleasurable, world ! but, no farewells are known beyond the grave ; to the scenes which will then open upon you you will never bid adieu. Start forward, then, my fellow-pilgrim ; start forward, in your thoughts, to everlasting

scenes, and roam among the immeasurable ages that beyond the judgment-day. How the world recedes as advance. It sinks to a speck—to a mote—to nothing. six thousand years, or six thousand ages, dwindle as you down the tide of eternity;—they sink to an hour—to a moment—to the twinkling of an eye—to nothingness itself. Remember, that on that awful tide you must shortly sail, the world is nothing to you. Strive to love it no more than you will do, when myriads of ages after its destruction look back upon it. Value its honours as you will value them, and prize its pleasures as then you will prize them. Let the prospect of those amazing scenes strike deeper or heart the salutary thought—I am but a traveller here.

§ 6. Above all, let the full prospect of eternity deep impression: let but the solemn idea of eternity dwell in mind, and life must then appear a journey or a dream. You would not think yourself at home, if, having travelled to the other end of the island, you passed an hour in a cottage; but, with much more propriety might it be said, that you were not on a journey then, than it can be said that you were not on a journey. That hour would bear some proportion to an age; but ages multiplied by ages bear none to eternity. A moment in which we breathe diminishes, in some degree, a thousand years; but ten thousand times ten thousand years is not eternity. "Suppose," says a writer of the seventeenth century,* "that the vast ocean were distilled drop by drop, but so slowly, that a thousand years should pass by

how much of eternity is spent? Nothing; for infinitely more remains."

O, keep your eye fixed on that eternity! look not at the things which are seen, but, at the things which are not seen; for the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal. Life is a vapour, a point, a nothing;—eternity is all. Yet a little while, and the golden hours of life will be gone; the last sands in the glass of time will have run out; the sun will have passed over the dial; the arrow will be flown; the vapour will be vanished, and time will be no longer: but vast, boundless, joyful or dreadful eternity, knows no limits, and fears or hopes no end. How can you much rejoice in pleasures, that are dying while you enjoy them! or sorrow much at distresses, that are vanishing while you feel them! Loosen, then, your heart from the earth: it is but a world of dreams and shadows, through which you journey to a world of solemn and eternal realities. Let the world talk of their pleasures, and be as cheerful as their condition should render them wretched; but, do you think of ending time and unending eternity.—Eternity! blessed or dreadful word! whose meaning no numbers can unfold, no ages declare; into whose depths no eye but that of God has pierced; a span, of whose length no heart has ever comprehended. O, look at that eternity more! So near the world where all is solemn, should you trifle? So near the state where all is endless, can you prize what is perishing? At the gate of eternity, on the threshold of an endless world, or at most with but a few steps before you must step into it, are the concerns of a fleeting pilgrimage of much importance? Are you so near doing, what you must do for ever; so near rejoicing, where you must rejoice for ever, or mourning, where you must mourn for ever; and should not this make a transitory life and a perishing world little things indeed? Live, then, O, live, as a traveller to eternity; a pilgrim here, pressing to a happy, endless home!

§ 7. While this is your condition, if a Christian indeed, even here you belong to a better world.—You are a stranger; but, you have a settled dwelling-place.—You are a pilgrim; but, you have a rest.—There is a family to which you belong; a family in that country "where pilgrims roam no more." That family is the family of God, and that home is heaven. Strange

yet delightful, thought! but, not more strange than Come, let us survey this privilege. Let us take a view Christian, as already a member of the family of heaven

God, in the Scriptures, assures us, that this is the case are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow-citizens of the saints, and of the HOUSEHOLD of God."* "Of Jesus Christ, of whom the whole family in heaven are named."† "Our conversation is in heaven, from also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ."‡

These passages solemnly assert, that the Christian, world, really belongs to a better; and is a member of sojourning below. Those spirits that are perfected those ministering angels that watch over the heirs of salvation are his brethren. The connexion is real; though, when a pilgrim is surrounded with the veil of mortality, and the darkness of earthly night, he can scarcely realize its worth. These

passages are more pleasing, or more expressive, than the "our conversation is in heaven." The word conversation according to present use, does not suggest the idea intended. No word in the English language is so exact a translation of the original word, as citizenship. It asserts, that the Christian belongs to heaven, as really as the inhabitants of England belong to their favoured country. It declares, that the rights and privileges of heaven belong to the Christian, as the rights and privileges of Englishmen belong to the inhabitants of England. Heaven is the country to which we belong. Heaven is the land whose natives we claim.


walk or commune with you : it is true the gladness, that mingled with no alloy, does not yet overflow your soul ; have your eyes yet seen the King, the Lord of hosts.—this and much more, respecting your state, is true ; but, this cannot prove, that the Christian is no citizen of heaven.

Englishman, wandering in China or New Zealand, is still Englishman. He claims England's protection, and has an undisputed title to all the rights and privileges that England's children enjoy. Though his absence be long, though his absence be far, England, that "pearl of the ocean, that gem of the earth," is still his country ; England is his home. Let him roam where he will, if it be where England's power extends, that power still spreads over him a protecting shield. When he returns to England, he finds it still HIS country : no man's act drives him as a stranger from its shores. He lands with confidence ; he settles with no apprehension of orders to depart ; for England is his home.—Thus, when tossed upon the sea of life, or wandering in the wilderness of time, the Christian may exult, that heaven is his country, that heaven is his home. Wherever he roam, he is a citizen of heaven. The broad shield of the King of heaven and the heaven of heavens extended over his otherwise unprotected head. And when he has ended all his journeys, all his voyages, all his days, all weeks, and years, of distance and absence ; and when the billow of life has driven his vessel into its final harbour ; when will he land upon the heavenly shore, and not be deemed an alien or an intruder there. A citizen of heaven long before ; as such he will land, and find heaven indeed his home.

§ 9. The Scriptures rise in their description of the Christian's privileges, when they add the "whole family in heaven and earth ;" and represent the followers of Jesus on earth and in glory, as forming but one family. How pleasing, how ennobling, is this view ! The disciples of Jesus, who have passed the stream of death, rest from every labour. They shine as the sun in the kingdom of their Father. Jesus, their Shepherd, so was "their boast through time, is their bliss through eternity."—Happy conquerors ! Yet, they have brethren below. The disciples of Jesus below belong to the same family. No part is not dearer to God than the other. *The whole family in heaven and earth has the same parent, and is loved*

with the same love. The whole family has but one Shepherd, and the same interest in his overflowing kindness and tender care. The same hand protects them all. The same blood redeemed them all. The same love has crowned, or is about to crown, them all. The whole family has but one Father, one Saviour, one Sanctifier, and one heaven. The same privileges belong to all; the same eternal love is fixed on all. The same Spirit inhabits all, and the same heaven is the home of all. Part are landed on the heavenly shore; the gales of death are driving others into the harbour; and to it all the rest, urged on by wind and tide, hasten apace. The whole family in heaven and earth will soon be the family in heaven; a family for ever unbroken there.

The father of a numerous family has some of his beloved offspring resident under his roof; but, one son is gone to America, and another to India, and a third to Turkey, and a fourth to Russia. The father loves them all with equal love; cares for them all with equal kindness; prays for them all with equal fervour, and expects them all at home ere long, to form one family again; and even now, though scattered, they are but one. Death must tear asunder the ties that join this family; but, there is a family, whose union death cannot dissolve, whose union death itself cements. It is the whole family of God, in heaven and earth. Happy family! that boasts one Father's love, and feels one Father's care: that



This view of the Christian state should,

§ 11. Lighten trouble, and make the heaviest earthly trials pear to you as they did to St. Paul—light afflictions, which but for a moment. If this world were your all, well indeed might you make much account of its trials and griefs; t, should a citizen of heaven, a member of God's immortal nily, *deeply* feel the trials of a rough but short voyage? or an unpleasant but hasty journey? Could one of the family, io has reached his rest, return to this world to spend a few ore days below, how light would he esteem those trials which : the trials of a moment! how little would he regard those lictions, that, as in the twinkling of an eye, will vanish for er! In the day of trial think, This is not my country: there no trouble in that happy land. This is not my home; but shall reach it soon, and then shall bid a last farewell to sorw and to care.

§ 12. Let this subject urge upon you, how momentous is e pursuit of holiness, how infinitely inconsistent with your naracter is the indulgence of sin! Could an angel of light, or ne of the spirits of the just, visit this world, and spend a few ars here, how inexpressibly shocking would it be thought r such a being to indulge in iniquity! Would it not be said him, How dreadfully inconsistent is this with your charac- r and your connexions! Do you not belong to heaven? are ou not a member of the family of God? and will you plunge om that height of privilege, and disgrace that sacred charac- r? If you are a Christian, you belong to the same family, id should pant after the lovely likeness of Jesus, which glo- fied spirits bear. Like theirs should be your love and hatred, our aversion and delight. The dispositions that dwell in eir breasts, are those you should cherish in yours. The pirit that glows in their souls, is the spirit that should ani- ate yours. If viewed aright, wilful sin would appear almost : shocking in you, as it would in them; for the whole fa- ily in heaven and earth is one in Christ Jesus. One in pri- leges, one in blessings, one in friends, one in obligations; ad, therefore, bound by every holy tie, to be *one in princi- le, one in disposition, one in practice*. Revere yourself. espect your high and holy calling, and pray to live and act s a member of Jesus's family, as a traveller to the skies. Love

not the world, neither the things of the world; for you are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God. Love to the world is a sin peculiarly below the character of an heir of immortal glory. If such a thing could be, how debasing would it be thought, for an angel or saint to descend from heaven, to amuse himself with an infant's toys! In the light of eternity, the world and all its concerns are childish trifles, compared with the Christian's immortal hopes and grand concerns. If you neglect them, through attachment to a dying world, you act almost as unworthy of your character, as an angel would act of his, were he to leave the glorious employments of heaven, and come to earth for the sake of an infant's playthings. Crowns and kingdoms, riches and honours, the most extensive or the most exalted, are mean as a baby's toys, compared with the crown to which you aspire, and with the honour of belonging to the family of God.

§ 13. Learn from this important view of your condition one lesson more. It should teach you to live waiting for your Lord. The blessed Jesus has taught us to live waiting for his coming. "Let your loins be girded about, and your lights burning; and ye yourselves like unto men that wait for their lord. Blessed are those servants, whom the lord, when he cometh, shall find watching."ⁱ "I say unto all, Watch."^k The followers of Christ are described as those who have turned from idols to serve the living God, and to wait

fore to necessary concerns, but still their hearts are gone
er their father. They are looking for their new abode.
ey are waiting for their father's coming.

Such are the feelings and views which you should cherish.
t feelings that will prevent your discharging the duties of
; that will drive you into a desert, or turn you to a her-
t; but, that will lead you to act and live as not at home,
t looking for your Lord; waiting as those children would
it. Not building on long years below. Not expecting
at things here, but with a heart untied from the world,
dy to go be the warning ever so short, and to welcome
ur Lord let him come ever so soon.

Blessed are they who indulge this watching, waiting spi-
: the King of heaven and earth has pronounced them
ssed.

§ 14. But, perhaps, I am addressing one of a character very
posite to that described in these pages. Perhaps you who
id these lines are no member of the family of God;—no
low-citizen with the saints;—no heir of heaven and im-
ortality. If it be so, O! let me for a moment affectionately
eak to you. How pitiable is your condition! Your transi-
t morning might be the dawn of an immortal day! Your
in, half-painful, half-pleasing life on earth, might be the
erunner of an endless life of unmixed bliss above! But,
u slight the Saviour who would conduct you to that abode.
u, who might, through the grace of Jesus, ascend to the
gdom of God, and range that blessed world for ever, are
isfied, alas! with the low scenes of earth. You might
al angels, as an inhabitant of heaven; but, by taking up
ur portion here, become the rival of the brutes that perish.
re you bury all your hopes. Here you renounce that great
vation, which once finally lost can never be regained. O,
iful and unhappy choice! When we see swine wallowing
the mire, we see them gratifying themselves, and losing
thing, by their filthy pleasure; but, when we see immortal
atures wallowing on earth in the mire of sin and sensuality,
e see them losing more than any tongue can express. Were
e, every where around us, to see persons, once the amiable
d intelligent ornaments of society, renouncing all the de-
hts of life, and seeking no higher happiness than to roll
ith swine in the mud, or to grovel in a dunghill; could we

see a more pitiable sight ? or one that would raise more melancholy reflections ? Alas, we might exclaim, how changed are these ! once so amiable, now so debased ! once so beautiful, now so miserable ! once the ornaments of the world, now more debased than the trusty dog, or the generous horse. But, one sight appears more melancholy. To see men that might be heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ might, in seraphic bliss, walk the spacious regions of heaven, and, washed in the blood of the Lamb, be happy and glorious for ever : to see these slighting the only Saviour's gracious love, rejecting immortal hopes, and damning their own mortal souls ; to see the young and the aged, the gay and the grave, the cheerful and the sad, the rich and the poor, this by millions, is a pitiable sight indeed ! What must appear to the angels of heaven ?

“ Could they tremble, 'twere at such a sight.”

Are you one of the number ? Unhappy creature ! poor ! how wretched ! how undone ! O, awake before ruin awakes you ! and while the Saviour invites you to fold, to his family, be not so besotted by sin, so led captive by the devil, as to refuse the offered mercy.



ness of the most elevated kind, but connects this holiness with the deepest humility. "Be ye holy, for I am holy."^a Follow holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord."^b The Scriptures recognize not as a thing of any value, that inactive kind of virtue, which consists in doing no harm. To leave undone what we ought to do, is as really sin, as to do what we ought not. Accordingly, the Christian's faith is presented, not as faith which merely preserves him from sin, but which "works by love."^c The Christian's love is described, not as love which evaporates in empty professions, but which constrains "him to live not to himself, but to the Lord Jesus Christ."^d The servant who had one talent committed to him which he neglected to improve, is declared to be a slothful and wicked servant; not because he had wasted that talent, but because he had made no improvement of the trust. The blessed Saviour describes myriads as condemned to destruction with the devil and his angels, not for crimes they had perpetrated, but for the neglect of duties they had omitted.^e When the different virtues that should adorn the Christian character are compared to fruit, this fruit is represented as indispensably necessary. This lesson is inculcated on the Lord in various expressive ways. He taught it by the parable of a fig-tree planted in the vineyard.^f The owner sought fruit, not leaves; and his forbearance was extended to the tree, under the hope of its producing fruit. The great husbandman expects the fruits of piety, and the leaves of a profession will not be valued where the fruit is wanting. In an expressive miracle the Lord taught the same important lesson, when he said to the barren fig-tree, Let no fruit grow on thee henceforward for ever.^g Many professors of religion appear satisfied, if they disgrace not their profession by a flagrant inconsistency; yet, let such consider the fig-tree in the vineyard was not ordered to be cut down because it bore pernicious fruit, but because it bore no fruit. The tree which withered at Jesus's word, was not blasted because it was covered with poisonous berries, but because it had no thing but leaves. As the adorable Jesus thus declares, that his followers will produce the fruits of holiness; he also declares, that this will not be in a small and inconsiderable

^a 1 Pet. i. 16. ^(b) Heb. xiii. 14. ^(c) Gal. v. 6. ^(d) 2 Cor. v. 15.
^(e) Matt. xxv. 41-43, 45, 46. ^(f) Luke xiii. 6-9. ^(g) Matt. xxi. 19.

PAUL AN EXAMPLE OF CHRISTIAN HOLINESS.

e. When he compares himself to a vine, and his disciples to the branches, he says of those disciples, "He that is in me and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit. Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear MUCH fruit."¹ In the parable of the sower, he describes his disciples as producing thirty, sixty, and a hundred-fold; some as rising to much more elevated than that of others; yet, while some are a hundred-fold, those who produce the least yield thirty.

Ask the husbandman, and he will tell you, that thirty is no inconsiderable increase. Conformable with these representations are the divine admonitions. "Be ye stedfast, unmovable, ALWAYS ABOUNDING in the work of the Lord."² Diligent, that ye may be found of him in peace WITHOUT SPOT AND BLAMELESS."³

2. An instructive example of the spirit with which Christ should pant after holiness, was exhibited by the apostle; "Herein do I exercise myself, to have always a conscience void of offence towards God and man."⁴ A conscience void of offence towards God, that should charge him with neglect of God's precepts, that should witness, that he devoted his whole heart, and all he was and had, to God. A conscience void of offence towards men, that should bear testimony of his concern to discharge all the duties of life, to do to all as they would have them do to him, to furnish none with any ground of complaint against him, but rather, as far as ability allowed, to do good to all around him. This he laboured to possess *always*. Yet, after all, acknowledged himself less than the least of all saints; the chief of sinners, saved by

3. The same spirit breathes in his affectionate address to the Philippians:—"Not as though I had already attained, or were already perfect; but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark, for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus."⁵ When Paul made this impressive declaration, he had probably been nearly thirty years a Christian. His splendid course was never run; he had laboured above measure; he had suffered much; he had been enabled to exemplify, in no common degree, the mild and brilliant glories of Christianity—the real

¹ John xv. 5, 8, 2.

(d) Acts xxiv. 16.

(i) 1 Cor. xv. 58.

(m) Phil. iii. 12-14.

(k) 2 Pet. iii. 14.

(n) Ps.

THE EXAMPLE OF THE LORD TO BE IMITATED. 1;

never tires, the love that never cools, the patience that never slackens: yet, such are the ideas of the exalted nature of gospel holiness, that these long years of labour, of suffering, and of ripening are still pressed on, and aimed at something higher than any he yet had reached. Nor do the Scriptures represent this labouring after holiness, as something peculiar to the apostle; for the Holy Spirit directed him to add, brethren, be ye followers together of me, and mark them which so walk, as ye have us for an ensample."^a

But in the pursuit of Christian holiness, the word of God directs us to an infinitely higher pattern for imitation, at now contemplated. "Be ye followers of God, as his dear children."^b "Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect."^c As the blessed God himself is set before us as a pattern for imitation, in the exercise of benevolence; the holy Jesus is set before us, as an example to be copied, in the general conduct of life. He also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps."^d "He that saith he abideth in him, let him also so to walk EVEN AS HE WALKED."^e "My Father's voice, and I know them, and they follow me."^f No example of spotless holiness can be proposed, than the holy Jesus. Even infidels have admired his unblemished life, and on it passed eulogiums. But his disciples were upon to imitate, as well as to admire; to follow, as well as to applaud. Cherish the spirit, that burning with a closer resemblance to the blessed Saviour, and for the glory of his glory, thinks nothing gained while any sin is ungained, nothing done while any thing remains to be done. Except when you acknowledge what God has done for you, to cherish gratitude for grace enjoyed, for graces you have gained, and reach at more. It is an error, FORGET the things *behind*, and reach at

Christian holiness must be progressive. Whatever attainment of the divine life you may have reached, much is still to be gained. In eminent Christians, how low, how weak, how far from perfection, compared with what they ought to be!

21. (a) Eph. iv. 32; v. 1.
(r) 1 John ii. 6.

(p) Matt. v. 45-48.
(c) John x. 27.

degree. When he compares himself to a vine, and his disciples to the branches, he says of those disciples, "He that abideth in me and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit. Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear MUCH fruit."^(d) In the parable of the sower, he describes his disciples as producing thirty, sixty, and a hundred-fold; some as rising to piety much more elevated than that of others; yet, while some yield a hundred-fold, those who produce the least yield thirty-fold. Ask the husbandman, and he will tell you, that thirty-fold is no inconsiderable increase. Conformable with these representations are the divine admonitions. "Be ye stedfast, unmovable, ALWAYS ABOUNDING in the work of the Lord."^(e) "Be diligent, that ye may be found of him in peace WITHOUT SPOT AND BLAMELESS."^(f)

§ 2. An instructive example of the spirit with which Christians should pant after holiness, was exhibited by the apostle Paul; "Herein do I exercise myself, to have always a conscience void of offence towards God and man."^(g) A conscience void of offence towards God, that should charge him with no neglect of God's precepts, that should witness, that he devoted his whole heart, and all he was and had, to God. A conscience void of offence towards men, that should bear testimony to his concern to discharge all the duties of life, to do to all as he would have them do to him, to furnish none with any cause of complaint against him, but rather, as far as ability extended, to do good to all around him. This he laboured to possess *always*. Yet, after all, acknowledged himself less than the least of all saints; the chief of sinners, saved by grace. The same spirit breathes in his affectionate address to the Philippians:—"Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect; but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark, for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus."^(h) When St. Paul made this impressive declaration, he had probably been nearly thirty years a Christian. His splendid course was nearly run; he had laboured above measure; he had suffered *much*; he had been enabled to exemplify, in no common degree, the mild and brilliant glories of Christianity—the real

(d) John xv. 5, 8, 9.

(e) Acts xxiv. 16.

(f) 1 Cor. xv. 58.

(g) 2 Pet. iii. 14.

(h) Phil. iii. 12-14.

at never tires, the love that never cools, the patience that never wearies, the benevolence that never slackens: yet, such were his ideas of the exalted nature of gospel holiness, that after these long years of labour, of suffering, and of ripening eternity, he still pressed on, and aimed at something higher than all the heights he yet had reached. Nor do the Scriptures represent this labouring after holiness, as something peculiar to the great apostle; for the Holy Spirit directed him to add, "Brethren, be ye followers together of me, and mark them which walk so, as ye have us for an ensample."ⁿ

§ 3. But in the pursuit of Christian holiness, the word of God directs us to an infinitely higher pattern for imitation, than that now contemplated. "Be ye followers of God, ye dear children."^o "Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect."^p As the blessed God is proposed as a pattern for imitation, in the exercise of benevolent affections; the holy Jesus is set before us, as an example we are called to copy, in the general conduct of life. "Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps."^q "He that saith he abideth in him, ought himself also so to walk EVEN AS HE WALKED."^r "My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me."^s A nobler example of spotless holiness cannot be proposed, than that of the holy Jesus. Even infidels have admired his unblemished life, and on it passed eulogiums. But his disciples are called upon to imitate, as well as to admire; to follow, as well as to applaud. Cherish the spirit, that burning with desires for a closer resemblance to the blessed Saviour, and for the diffusion of his glory, thinks nothing gained while anything remains ungained, nothing done while any thing remains undone. Except when you acknowledge what God has done for you, to cherish gratitude for grace enjoyed, forget all that you have gained, and reach at more. It is an apostolic lesson, FORGET the things *behind*, and reach at those before.

§ 4. Christian holiness must be progressive. Whatever attainments in the divine life you may have reached, much is yet unattained. In eminent Christians, how low, how weak, are Christian graces, compared with what they ought to be!

(n) Phil. iii. 17.

(o) 1 Pet. ii. 21.

(p) Eph. iv. 32; v. 1.

(q) 1 John ii. 6.

N 2

(r) Matt. v. 45—48.

(s) John x. 27.

The meek forbearance, that resents no injury; the compassion, that never utters a murmur; the expansiveness that pities and blesses friends and foes; and all the untold charms of Christian piety; these, even when they shine like the stars in solemn silence, yet like their voice,

“The hand that form’d us is divine.”

These impress hearts that no arguments would reach, reasonings convince; and lead even some that know not to acknowledge that there is a power in religion to which they are strangers, a reality of which they have no concept.

The eloquence of a holy life speaks in any land. Mr. Peter had laboured for a length of time at Balasore. A young Brahmin, named Jugunnat’ha, embraced the Gospel. Soon after, the brother of a native magistrate said to him, “Do you believe this from your heart?” Jugunnat’ha said, “Yes.” “Well,” said the other, “we are watching; making an experiment: if you live a holy life we shall believe that this gospel is true. Padree-sahib has been preaching three or four years; but we have our doubts, and cannot believe; none of the Ooriyas till now have embraced the Gospel: if you bear good fruit, many will follow your example.”

Well indeed said the blessed Saviour, “Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven.” And do you not see how to promote this double object, the glory of God



ention; this double object is the aim of those ministering spirits, which are sent forth to minister to the heirs of salvation, to diffuse happiness and holiness among beings destined to immortality, and to advance the honour of that God whom all the hosts of heaven adore. This is indeed a pursuit, in which an archangel might delight to consume myriads of ages; and this in your sphere you may advance, by the silent lessons of a holy example. In the epistle to the Philippians, his subject is placed in a most important and striking light. 'Holding forth the word of life.' Preach the gospel in your lives; preach it by your conduct, and thus hold forth the word of life to an undone world, as a light-house displays its light, at the entrance of a harbour. A building of that description is designed to warn mariners of rocks or quicksands, and to show them a safe passage out of a stormy sea into a peaceful haven. Thus every Christian should stand, like a light-house on the edge of the ocean, to show all around him how they may escape the storm of eternal wrath, and where they may find a haven of repose; in other words, by a blameless life to teach mankind, that this is happiness, holiness, and life eternal, to know the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom he has sent.

Important situation! Who that feels one spark of love to God, or love to man, but must be anxious to accomplish heaven's benevolent design? and, saved himself, to be the means of saving others? Indeed, so powerful, so effective is Christian example, that it seems reasonable to believe, if individuals and nations, that have professed the gospel, had universally adorned the gospel, the whole world must long since have been brought to bow to the sceptre of the cross.

§ 7. The motives hitherto adduced for a devout attention to holiness have been chiefly of a pleasing description; but here are others of another kind, which ought not to be entirely unnoticed. If holiness is not your pursuit, you have no evidence that you enjoy God's grace: you have evidence, that in your present state, you cannot enter his kingdom—'Without holiness no man shall see the Lord.' However fair your profession, however splendid your gifts, however extensive your knowledge, without holiness you are like a lifeless corpse, that has the human form, but wants the soul;

or like a whited sepulchre, fair without, but within full of dead men's bones and all uncleanness. To such the Son of God declares, "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven. Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity."^a

§ 8. Without holiness you would act the part of the worst of traitors to the Son of God. When Judas betrayed him, he professed affection and friendship, and kissed him, and said, "Hail, Master!" while he pointed him out as the prey of cruelty and scorn. The inconsistent professor of the gospel really imitates Judas. He hails Christ as his Master and Saviour; while he exposes the cause of Christ to contempt and reproach, by his ungodly life. In the world, religion is scorned through him; in his own family, it is hated through him. The world and his family think, If this is religion we are as well or better without it. Satan injured Christ but Judas must help him. So Satan opposes the progress of the gospel, and injures the religion of Jesus, but other Judases must help him now, or he would labour in vain to throw a shade over the bright glories of Christianity. He leads these insincere or careless professors of the gospel into dishonesty, or lying, or drunkenness, or some other crime; and then an outcry is raised against the religion of Jesus, through their wickedness, that are really strangers to religion and traitors to the Lord Jesus Christ. Accordingly, such persons are described as enemies "to the cross of Christ."^a How terrific a description of any that have professed subjection to Jesus! **ENEMIES TO THE CROSS OF CHRIST.** The cross—God's grand instrument of saving mercy. The cross of Christ—where shines the brightest display of heavenly love. The cross of Christ—man's only refuge; the sinner's only hope. The cross of Christ—the means by which that blessed sufferer would subdue the world; and these, even while they profess subjection to his sway, enemies to his cross. Dreadful character!

(c) Matt. vii. 21-23.

(a) Phil. iii. 18.

§ 9. Without holiness you would rob God of his right, and violate your own most solemn engagements. You are not your own; but God claims your services, your love, your life; to be inattentive to holiness, is to deny him all he claims. It is a great crime to rob a man of his property, but it is a more atrocious one to rob God of his glory; and not merely to rob him of his right, but to blacken the villany, by giving to the world, and sin, and Satan, the time, talents, and obedience which God claims. And all this wickedness in a professor of religion, rendered still more wicked, because it is connected with the violation of the most solemn engagements. Is not that man thought a poor, perjured rascal, who swears allegiance to his country and king, and then deserts and fights against both? Is he not deemed still more vile, if to perjury and desertion he adds treachery? and while he acts as his country's enemy, wears her colours, and professes to be a friend? Such, or a still more wretched and wicked being, is he, who professes the gospel, and slights the holiness by which it is adorned. He, who perjured by the violation of all his solemn engagements to God, has deserted his station, and is treacherously serving the devil while he professes to fight under the banners of Jesus.

§ 10. Without holiness you would contribute to defeat the benevolent labours of others, and render injury to the church of Christ, as real as that offered by the most bitter persecutors. Suppose you knew a profane scoffer, that made it his business to counteract the zealous labours of some faithful minister, would you not think him a miserable and dreadful instance of human depravity? would you not tremble at the prospect of his impending destruction? Ah, my friend! ministers of the gospel have worse enemies than profane scoffers. Unholy professors much more effectually defeat their labours, than all the scoffers upon earth. When those, who are strangers to the power of the gospel, behold its professors as careless, as dissipated, as fond of worldly vanity, as resentful, or as covetous and worldly-minded, as themselves; when they see little or no difference, in conduct, disposition, and temper, between a professor of religion, and moral persons, who profess it not, they infer that religion is an empty name. And when they see conduct openly flagrant in its professed disciples, they infer that all professors are alike, and that all profession

of religion is hypocrisy. It is true this is an unjust imputation, but it is a common one; and they who give occasion for it, more effectually than scoffers or infidels, hinder from embracing the gospel of salvation. And doing so, they act the same part as the most bitter persecutors. At what they in reality aim, but to support paganism or antichrist, and to keep mankind from the true way of life and peace. For what end but this were their dungeons, their racks, flames *occasionally* employed? And this end the inconsistent professor of religion, by his unholy deportment, *daily* promotes. Some who have begun to seek the way of peace, disgusted by his conduct, give up the pursuit; and quenches in their hearts the little spark of grace, occasion them to resist the Holy Spirit, contributes to their damnation and becomes a partaker of their sins. Others, always weak, less, from the same cause, are sealed up under carelessness and impenitence of heart.

§ 11. While leading a careless or unholy life, the inconsistent professor of religion really imitates the devil, upholds his kingdom, and most effectually does him service. He imitates Satan. That enemy of God and man, it is said, never appears as an angel of light; but he is a devil still. So he who professes religion while he does not practise it, may appear in his conversation a child of God; but he is still a child of Satan. He upholds the kingdom of the wicked one. So he endeavours to uphold that kingdom, by preventing men from discerning the worth and excellency of the gospel. The Scriptures declare this.^b Who so successfully hinder mankind from discerning the real nature of religion, as its professors? Religion, as exhibited in the lives of some faithful followers, is a fair and beautiful form, adorned with graces so divine and heavenly, that it is sufficiently powerful if not to captivate every heart, yet to extort respect and admiration even from its foes; but the religion of an ungodly professor of the gospel, when seen, like a hideous monster, excites abhorrence and disgust; and mankind are ready to exclaim, If this is religion, we are better without it. How are they hindered from discerning its heavenly excellency, and taking a monster for it, are prevented from seeing its *eternal* worth. The unholy man or woman that occasions

(b) 2 Cor. iv. 3, 4.

is mischief, is indeed one of the most faithful servants of the **masked** one. The profligate cannot so effectually serve Satan **the hypocrite**. The profligate is like an enemy without **the walls** of a fortress; he appears in his true colours, and **men** are aware of him; but the unholy professor is like a **treacherous wretch**, that has crept into the fortress only to **betray** it. A drunkard, a dishonest man, a liar, a miser, out of **the church** of Christ, can never render Satan half the service **they** can render him when within its walls.

§ 12. If you profess religion and neglect holiness, you may **be** a source of mischief and misery for ages and ages. It is **impossible** to tell where the evil of a sinful example, or even **of one** sinful action, may terminate. One open crime, and **much** more an unholy life, in a professor of religion, may be **the means** of propagating vice and misery, and dealing to many **death** and damnation for generations to come. How easily **may this** be the case, when a young person is influenced by **such causes** to neglect the Saviour. The impressions he felt **are destroyed**, his desires are quenched, and his soul is **unlone**. But he, perhaps, becomes the head of a family. Had **he followed** Jesus, his children would have been trained up **to God**; but now their eternal welfare is slighted, and they **are** up **beathens** like their father. Perhaps the same course of religion and vice is acted over again by their descendants, **and again** by theirs, each new generation copying the **example** of the former. This is not uncommon. Thus sin and **misery** are propagated from age to age. And that professor **of the gospel**, who by his crimes prevented the ancestor of **such a family** from following the Saviour, is, in an awful **degree**, a cause of all this sin and misery! Ah! how watchful **should a Christian** be, that no one at the judgment-bar may **be able** to stand forth and say, "My ruin is owing to that sin, **by which** you wounded your friends and disgraced your **profession**; but for that I should have sought the Saviour, but **through** that I pronounced religion hypocrisy, and neglectful **of it** lived and died."

§ 13. Neglecting holiness you would expose others and **yourself** to that awful woe, which the Lord has denounced **against those**, who slight his gospel on account of the sins of **others**, and against those who are the cause of this neglect.

"Woe unto the world because of offences ! for it must needs be that offences come ; but woe to that man by whom offence cometh."^c Let the unholy professor of religion tremble at this heavy woe, denounced by such gentle lips !—the woe which, heavier than a mill-stone round the neck, will sink him in a direful ocean of eternal wrath. O, let the holy professor of the gospel meditate terror, while he meditates on these words, "Woe unto *that* man by whom offence cometh."

§ 14. Such are a few of those awfully momentous motives that urge the Christian to make advancing holiness his fervent desire, his incessant pursuit, his daily prayer. If you would improve life's little span ; if you would glorify God and honour Christ ; if you would recommend religion to mankind and lead them to the abodes of bliss, you must follow a consistent holiness. Without it, the more zeal you display for the gospel, the more mischief will you do. If you would not be shut out of heaven ; if you would not be another Judas, another traitor to the blessed Saviour ; if you would not defeat the labours of gospel ministers, more effectually than done by bitter persecutors ; if you would not rob God of his right ; if you would not lie to God, and become a poor injured wretch ; if you would not uphold the kingdom of the devil, carry on his designs, and be his most faithful servant ; if you would not contribute to spread sin and misery and damnation for ages to come ; if you would not expose others and yourself, to one of the most tremendous woes ever denounced from heaven against sin and sinners ; if you would not commit all these hideous sins ; if you would not do this complicated mischief ; in short, if you would not be a pest to earth, an enemy to the cross of Christ, a friend of the devil, an agent of hell, and a curse to yourself, you must follow after holiness.

(c) Matt. xviii. 6, 7.

CHAPTER VIII.

ON THE MORIFICATION OF SIN.

§ 1. **WERE** man what Adam was, what angels are, or what the spirits of the just will be, holiness would cost no pains, and require no labours. But during the present state, so much corruption works within, that the daily mortification of sin is essential to growth in grace.

The Scriptures contain many impressive admonitions respecting this duty. "Let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us."^a "If ye live after the flesh, ye shall die; but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live."^b "Abhor that which is evil."^c "As strangers and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul."^d

That inbred corruption, which is the fruitful parent of all man's actual transgressions, is described in the Bible as "the old man."^e Not as something light and trifling, which attaches itself to man; but as that which is so incorporated with his fallen nature that it becomes as it were "the man."^f It is represented also as the body of sin, in which all sins are united, as all the members of man are in a human body.^g

Freed by divine grace from the "dominion" of sin, the Christian is not freed from its more open assaults, or secret guile. It is like an enemy defeated, and trodden under foot, yet not dead; still possessed of life, and only wanting an opportunity to rise again, and ready then to act with vigour. Or like an enemy nailed to a cross, that if not kept there till his strength is exhausted, and life expires, may live again, and be a worse enemy than ever. Hence the important admonitions, to mortify sin, to mortify the deeds of the body. The sense of the original word is, to kill, to destroy. It contains

(a) Heb. xii. 1.

(d) 1 Pet. ii. 11.

(b) Rom. viii. 12, 13.

(e) (f) Rom. vi. 6.

(c) Rom. xii. 9.

(g) Rom. vi. 17, 18.

therefore a direction, to aim at the utter destruction. The Scriptures do not, however, represent this enemy dead. Our old man is crucified. Crucifixion was a death. So sin does not die at once. Long will it perhaps seem dead, then show again that life is no then seem expiring, yet not expire. To the cross must be fastened, and wound after wound be inflicted or never should it be presumed to be quite dead, till it dies and dies eternally.

§ 2. If you would live to God, you must mortify sin not merely at avoiding sin in your outward conduct, but seek and pray to kill the root of it in your heart. You may do this, cherish self-acquaintance. Watch the motions of your heart. If a stranger to yourself, sin cannot be mortified; however it may be checked in your outward conduct, it will reign and triumph in your heart. Pride, filling you with self-conceit and self-importance, will promote covetousness, and make you indifferent to the miseries of others. It will pollute your motives, as God's glory is the ostensible object, your own praise the true, though hidden, spring of action. When affliction will be disposed to murmur. When others are more prosperous or applauded than you, instead of rejoicing in their happiness, you will be disposed to envy them. All the effect of sin that lies unmortified, and perhaps hidden in the heart. Hence too you will be studying for this world, when you should be meditating on a better; and planning for earth, when you should be reaching after heaven. The natural effect of all this is a cold, heartless, barren form of religion, where the life, and soul, and vital heat are wanting. It cannot be avoided unless you mortify sin, nor can sin be mortified without self-acquaintance.

To mortify sin, it is necessary that you have a deep conviction of the evil of those innumerable sins, the sins of the heart. These are hidden from the eye of man. Human laws have no cognizance of them; but the great Searcher of hearts looks upon them with the same abhorrence, as that which looks on finished crimes. Sin in the seed, in the thought, in the word, or the deed, is in his sight equally hateful. For he said, "Sin aims always at the utmost; every time it attempts to tempt or entice, might it have its own course, it v

it to the utmost sin in that kind. Every unclean thought would be adultery, if it could; every covetous desire would be oppression; every thought of unbelief would be heism, might it grow to its head."*

The sacred Scriptures represent those sins, which lie hidden in the heart, as incurring guilt and condemnation of the same description as the crimes to which they would lead. Thus the Judge of all declares, that a lustful thought cherished in the mind, incurs the guilt of adultery. "I say unto you, that whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her, hath committed adultery with her already in his heart."^b The indulgence of a resentful disposition, incurs the guilt of murder. "Whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer; and ye know that no murderer hath eternal life abiding in him."^c

On the same principle, he who meditates a dishonest action, is, in God's esteem, a thief; he who lets his vain mind dwell with pleasure on scenes of revelry, debauchery, and intoxication, stands chargeable in his Maker's sight with all those crimes. And they whose thoughts are occupied with vanity, excess, and pleasure, are, in the sight of God, guilty of the crimes and follies they would commit, if their situation placed these things within their power. Would you therefore mortify sin, view it as exceeding sinful; and remember that a sinful disposition indulged, as to guilt, is equivalent to the guilt of committing the sin, to which that disposition would lead. O, what myriads of millions of crimes are thus committed in the chambers of the mind and heart, those scenes of iniquity! crimes, hidden from every human eye, beneath impenetrable shades, yet all of them glaring, with hideous horror, before the face of eternal Majesty, as clearly as in the blaze of day.

§ 3. In mortifying sin, it is of unspeakable importance to observe, that sin be *really mortified*; not merely diverted to some other object, or permitted to flow in some new channel. It is to be apprehended, that the supposition that sin is mortified, when only diverted to a new object, is a frequent cause of ruinous deception. Thus, perhaps, the reigning sin of a man has been prodigality; he lays this sin aside, and ceases to be a spendthrift; but he takes up covetousness, and becomes

* Owen.

(b) Matt. v. 28.

(c) 1 John iii. 5.

a miser. Perhaps he has been covetous, he forsakes his covetous ways, he is no longer the slave of avarice; he is liberal, but he becomes the slave of ostentation. Another has been a profligate, proud of his drunken feats; he forsakes profligacy, frequents the house of prayer, and leads a regularity; but he is now as proud of his fancied piety. Another has been a leader in a tavern club; he forsakes former haunts and associates, and professes religion; but he knows no ease, and allows no quiet, unless he can be seen in the Christian church. Who does not see, that in all these and ten thousand such cases, sin is not mortified! Rottenness still rules. The man is still its slave. The power of iniquity is not lessened, but flows in another channel.

Another fatal mistake on this subject, is that of supposing sin mortified, when it is merely forsaken through a change of our circumstances and situations. The flight of time brings about many such changes. The faults and mischievous propensities of childhood give place to youthful lusts. These, in advanced life, are in a degree forsaken for the sins of manhood. Yet sin is not mortified; it is merely adapting its operations to the situations of its servants. The system of delusion continues even to the day of death, and many die beneath its influence. How often, when visiting persons on the verge of the grave, of whose conversion I had not the slightest doubt, have I heard them profess, that they gave up their sins when the fact was, that they felt they could keep them longer, and the world gave up them. Time changes the scene, but unless he be changed by a mightier than time, he remains the same from the days of sprightly childhood to the last feeble age.

As you value your eternal welfare, guard against the sin by which myriads are undone. If there be one bond which you would suffer to live, that one will kill your soul. If you have a true hatred for *any* sin, you will indulge against *every* sin; and if you would willingly spare one, it shows you not sincere in the destruction of any. Sinners do not aim at the destruction of every sin but one, in cherishing one you would as truly trample under foot the authority of God, as if you cherished all; as truly defeat the purpose of *yourself*, of the Redeemer's death. "For whoso *keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he*

of all."* Remember the blood of Christ was shed as much to atone for the secret sins of your heart, as for the more open transgressions of your life. Only the blood of the Son of God can wash away the stain of your least offence against the Majesty on high; and shall any sin be small in your esteem, when for the least that precious blood was shed! If you are indeed his follower, you will spare no sin.

§ 4. To mortify sin, watch more especially against those sins to which your circumstances or age may peculiarly expose you. As the constitutions and situations of mankind vary, so do their sinful propensities. Hence the admonition, to lay aside the sin which doth so EASILY BESET US. Consider what, in your unconverted state, were the sins to which your disposition most prompted you; and watch peculiarly against those sins. Some are peculiarly prone to pride, others to passion; some to sullenness and obstinacy, others to fiery resentment; some to envy, others to ambition and the love of glory, in other words, of worldly applause; others to love of worldly pleasure; some to strife, others to scandal and backbiting; some to heresies, others to drunkenness and lewdness; some to covetousness, others to prodigality; some to sloth, others, that are free from grosser crimes, to mere levity and folly. A cheerful disposition will be more liable to such sins as excessive levity, love of pleasure, and passion; a melancholy one to sullenness, to revenge, when brooding over imagined wrongs; to discontent, when destitute of desired advantages. Are you rich? you will be tempted to extravagance, and under the delusive idea of living conformably to your rank, will be tempted to squander in self-gratification or idle show, what would feed the hungry, clothe the naked, bring the blessing of multitudes ready to perish upon you, and if employed in diffusing divine knowledge, would spread it far and wide. *Are you rich? you will, if professedly liberal, be tempted to confine your liberality within such narrow bounds, that your donations to relieve the miseries of man, or assist the cause of God, will be really pitiful, paltry things, compared with the widow's mite, or the poor man's penny.* Are you rich? you will, if you have a family, be tempted to hoard so liberally for them, that you will probably, in the end, curse them with love to the world, with

alienation from God, with a disposition to be the slaves of fashion, and the associates of the gay, however wicked or worldly; and thus in the end will undo them for eternity. Probably not one rich man in ten thousand improves the important talent, wealth, as at the judgment bar he will wish to have employed it. Few indeed are our Reynoldses and our Thorntons. Are you poor? your situation will tempt you to discontent, to repinings and murmurings at your own humble lot, to envy and reproach those in more favourable circumstances. Are you young? you will be tempted to self-conceit; to slight the counsels of age and experience, of valuable friends or tender relatives, through the pride of your own foolish and wicked heart. You will be tempted to indulge in youthful lusts; to form friendships, or a more lasting union, with such as charm your ungoverned fancy, though they may be strangers to the grace of God, and the children of the wicked one. Are you in the last stage of life? you will be tempted to indulge unreasonable prejudices; to censure, without reason, the wisest and most benevolent plan because they differ from what you saw in youth; to murmur beneath the infirmities of advancing age, and to grasp, with tighter embrace, the world that is departing from you for ever. As in a journey through a wilderness, if you expected the assaults of tigers, you would particularly observe every bush where they could lie prepared for their fatal spring; if you

seemed a rational Christian ; and a zealous, warm-hearted disciple of the Lord Jesus Christ, is pronounced an enthusiast or a fanatic. Soft names are affixed to odious crimes. An abandoned whoremonger, or a profligate seducer, with the falsehood of Satan on his lips, is called a man of pleasure. A man, so full of infernal pride that he would risk his own life, to take his fellow-man's, for an offensive word, is deemed a man of honour. Revenge assumes the name of justice. Flattery is termed courtesy. Covetousness cloaks itself under the name of frugality ; and while adopting for its golden maxim the hackneyed remark, That charity begins at home, takes care that it shall end there too. Atheism and infidelity are free thinking or free inquiry. Thus the darkest crimes which men commit, are softened down, and represented as pleasing or honourable, by some specious and delusive name.

§ 6. While thus called to duties so eternally important, and yet so difficult, lean not upon a human arm. Trust not in your own ability or might. No inherent power of yours will ever accomplish the momentous work of mortifying sin. The Scriptures direct your view to a mightier agent ; to the spirit of God. " If ye, THROUGH THE SPIRIT, do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live."ⁿ As the Holy Spirit is the source of peace, and hope, and joy, and love, so by his influence and aid sin must be subdued and destroyed.

Look therefore to him, who sanctifies, renews, gives the disposition, and carries on till death the work of grace. Look to him for heavenly influence, to strike at the very root of sin ! Let mortification of this evil engage your labour ; yet still depend upon the Holy Spirit's aid, and go forward trusting in his might.

§ 7. To impress your mind most deeply with a hatred of sin, and with the necessity of mortifying this horrid evil, indulge such views as these of its unspeakable malignity.*

It is infinitely hateful. Sin is " the only object of God's infinite hatred." God is love. He loves his Son, his angels, his children. His love, like the sun shining in its strength, diffuses good through his immense dominions ; but sin is the object of his infinite abhorrence. A sinful word, or a sinful

(n) Rom. viii. 13.


On the malignity of sin, several thoughts are borrowed from Robert Bolton.

thought, has in it that evil, against which God's infinite hate and indignation are directed.

Sin is more hateful than the most hateful "fiend in hell than even the devil himself." For sin made Satan what he is. But for sin the dark fiends of hell had been angels of light; but for sin Satan himself had been a child of God. Had there been no sin there would have been no devil; had there been no sin there would have been no hell. Could an infernal spirit appear to you, glaring with hideous woe and hellish dispositions, what alarm would seize you! if power to flee remained, how would you flee from the horrid being? Flee then from sin, the parent of devils and the author of hell.

Sin is most polluting. Could Satan be cleansed from pollution of sin, he would no longer be a devil. Could fallen legions be cleansed from sin, instead of miserable fiends they would become happy angels. Could souls enduring the miseries of damnation be freed from its pollution, they would pass from the blackness of eternal night, to scenes of peace and joy, and love. Sin made them wretched, and its polluting stains, eternally upon their souls, will make them eternally hateful, eternally wretched.

Sin is most infectious. Like a contagious pestilence it pollutes and destroys all it touches. All within the reach of its infection die. The first sin polluted all the sons of



ever creation was made subject to vanity. And the sin lie lurking in the heart, unpardoned and it pollutes all man's words, affections, thoughts, blasts all his knowledge and privileges, kills all and damns his soul.

Its effects most fearful, most dreadful. It deprives God's favour, of all part and portion in the "first," a blessing worth more than a thousand the kind protection and paternal care of the Most High, the glorious guard of angels," the comfortable fellowship of saints, and the sweet delights these blessings bestow the quiet joy and tranquillity of a good conscience worth far more than a world; of all the ministrations and comforts, by which the Holy Spirit refreshes the hearts of holy men; of all calm true satisfaction in this life, and stretching forgiveness influence, it deprives the deathless soul of life; of the unspeakable joys of heaven; of that peace and endless bliss that patriarchs, prophets, and martyrs enjoy in the presence of God and the


indulged thus robs the soul of peace and happiness, it loads it with ills immense in their size and their duration. It subjects it "to blindness of vision of heart, horror of conscience," estrangement and bondage to Satan; to fear, uneasiness, and anxiety; to doubt and terror in the day of death; to separation from God, the source of happiness. It loads the soul with guilt that will last for ever; with guilt that will bring eternal torments and eternal despair. It kills the soul by death that never dies; for none can take the soul away, though millions make it an accursed thing. O, dreadful cruelty! for man to murder his own soul; and to make it die eternally. Is it to be to die for ever; to suffer the pangs of death as a prelude to suffering them to-morrow? What is to die from morning till night, and from night till morning, and die through days, and years, and centuries, and eternities in dying?"*

file, that it can never be pardoned or washed

* Dwight.

away, but by the blood of the Son of God. "Had all the dust of the earth been turned into silver, and the stones into pearls; should the boundless sea have streamed with nothing but liquid gold," all would not have been a sufficient ransom for one sinful soul. Should all the creatures of the earth, and all the angels of heaven, have offered themselves as a sacrifice to divine justice, all could not have expiated one sin, or atoned for one transgression. Or had the Son of God himself sought man's happiness by supplication only, there is no reason for supposing he could have been heard. He must suffer, or man eternally must die. And shall not the heart's blood of the Son of God, shed for sin, fill you with eternal abhorrence of that which murdered him on Calvary, and which, but for his death, would have murdered your soul with everlasting destruction?

Sin is unspeakably hateful and loathsome, because it is committed against God. It offends the blessed Majesty of heaven, insults the Father, wounds the Son, and grieves the Spirit. Had it power according to its nature, it would dethrone the Eternal, and strip him of his majesty and blessedness. O, how hellish is that evil, which thus lifts its hand against the King eternal, immortal, and invisible! What has not God done to bless you! From the void of non-existence he called you into being; formed a charming world for your reception here, and bid the sun shine and the seasons revolve




All this he has done ; and if more be wanting, all that is wanting he engages to do. Now think of sin, which you have indulged in your heart. It insults this blessed God, it offends him, as far as it can it injures him, it disorders his work, confuses what he made harmonious, darkens what he formed bright, renders hateful what he created lovely ; it abuses his mercies, it tramples his laws under foot, it does despite to the Spirit of his grace ; and had it power, as sure as it is sin, would hurl him from his throne. Such is sin. Will you cherish this monster of wickedness ? Can you think without horror of rebelling against so good, so great a Benefactor ? Can you bear the thought of burthening your soul with such selfish ingratitude ? Can you think of indulging in what God hates and the devil loves ? Surely you cannot. Then, hate sin ; mortify sin, the enemy of God, the enemy of Christ, the enemy of angels, the enemy of man, and the worst enemy of your immortal soul.

Consider again, that sin, in all so hateful, is in you more hateful. Is not God your God ? is he not your Father, the God of your choice, the object of your hopes ? have not you chosen him as your portion ? have not you in private and public avowed this choice ? have not you professed to yield him your heart, and to surrender to him all you are ? You were once a prodigal ; but have not you come back into your Father's family, and found an open door, a gracious welcome, and a Father's love ? Is not the Son of God your Saviour ? Did not he shed his blood to wash your stains away ? and have not you confessed before him, that "love so amazing, so divine," not merely demanded, but should have, your "life, your soul, your all ?" Are not you indebted to him for all your hopes, for peace and pardon ? Is not the Spirit of God your Sanctifier ? Are not you indebted to his gracious illuminations for all your comforts, and for all your knowledge of God and the Lamb ? for a disposition to walk in the way of peace ? for a heart to flee to the Saviour and his cross ? By faith in Jesus, have not you acquired a title to a life above ? and been introduced into the family of God ? Have not you had your hopes strengthened, and sealed your solemn vows, in the courts of your God, in the professions of your baptism, and at the table of your atoning Lord ? O, my friend, who then shall describe the evil of wilful sin in you ? You would sin

against the God of all these mercies, against your forgiving Father. You would sin against the solemn vows, by which your soul is bound to him. You would sin against your crucified Saviour; against his dying love; against him to whom your soul is committed; against him who writes your name in the book of life; against him who lives to promote your happiness in heaven, as once he died for you on earth against Jesus, your only hope, and whom you have engaged to serve and love. You, too, would sin against the blessed Spirit, who has sought your happiness, and been to you the source of numberless blessings. O, then, mortify sin—sin which inflicts all these evils, and is connected with all the worse than Satanic ingratitude.

When tempted to sin, compare the poor, short, vanishing delights of sensual pleasure, with the heaven of which sin would deprive, and the hell into which sin would plunge, you. If going to plunge into sin, think of the wages it earns; and consider, if you fall into that sin, you fall into hell, unless God's grace should bring you to true repentance, and of this you have no certainty.

Remember, that to consent to the enticements of sin, is to be guilty of that height of folly, which wants a name to express its greatness. It is as if you were to put into one scale of a balance, the glory and favour of the eternal God, the rich joys of an eternal heaven, the life of your own eterna



the influence of the cross of Christ is fatal to sin. Look to the Lamb of God suffering there: contemplate the severity of those nameless agonies; the depth of that bitter humiliation; the sharpness of those outward and inward torments; and then exclaim, "Was this for my sin? For my transgressions did he groan and die? Were my iniquities his intolerable burthen? Did my sin bring him from his Father's throne to the accursed cross and its ignominious sorrows? Oh! bitter were the fruits of sin, when man lost paradise; dreadful were the effects of sin, when the world perished in a deluge, or when Sodom and Gomorrah were overwhelmed with the fires kindled by an angry God: but not so dreadful did sin appear, when Adam lost Eden, when all nations were drowned, or when Sodom burned, as when the Son of God hung on the cross, and for my transgressions expired. Before his cross let me renounce my dearest lusts, and by the influence of his cross mortify every corruption."

§ 9. Besides other motives for the mortification of sin, it is by no means an inconsiderable one, that a single sin may fix upon your character a stain, which on this side the grave will never be worn out. A pious minister observes, "I have been much affected with the following reflection: Though, if not greatly deceived, I have had some degree of experimental acquaintance with Jesus Christ for almost forty years; though I have borne the ministerial character for upwards of twenty-five years; though I have been, perhaps, of some little use in the church of God; and though I have had a greater share of esteem among religious people than I had any reason to expect; yet, after all, it is possible for me, in one single hour of temptation, to blast my character—to ruin my public usefulness—and to render my warmest Christian friends ashamed of owning me."* An earthen vessel once cracked, though it may afterwards be used, will never again appear what it once was: so the character of a professor of religion, or a minister, once injured by any flagrant crime, into which unmortified sin may lead, has received a wound that will, probably, never be healed. In David's adultery, Hezekiah's ostentation, Peter's cowardice, falsehood, and perjury, it is too visible that even persons of eminent virtue may, if sin be not mortified, soon plunge deep in atrocious vices. And the same truth is

* Booth's Pastoral Cautions.

taught in the blasted characters of many, once conscious of piety and usefulness, but, perhaps, by a single transition so sunk, that, however penitent, they never rose. Think not therefore any Scriptural admonitions needless.

Permit me affectionately to caution you more narrowly against some sins.

§ 10. *Falsehood.* Every thing, whether in *jest* or that is not consistent with the strictest truth. Lying of so shameful a nature, that an ingenuous mind, even a stranger to converting grace, holds it in abhorrence; often we see this disgraceful sin committed, or near approached to it, and this in many ways. How many lies in trade, and in other pursuits of human life. The buyer lies, when he affirms an article is not worth its real value; the seller lies, when he declares it worth more, and asserts the cheap which he knows to be dear. The seller lies, when he declares that such a price is the very lowest, and immediately accepts a lower; the buyer lies, when he declares that a certain price is the highest he will give, and gives a higher. The physician or the surgeon lies, when he declares of his hopeless patient, that his danger is so, and recovery almost certain. The servant lies, when she declares that a master or mistress is out, whom she knows is not. That they are not at home to the person who inquires, is mere quibble, and lessens not the lie. The manufacturer lies, when he promises to complete an order by a certain

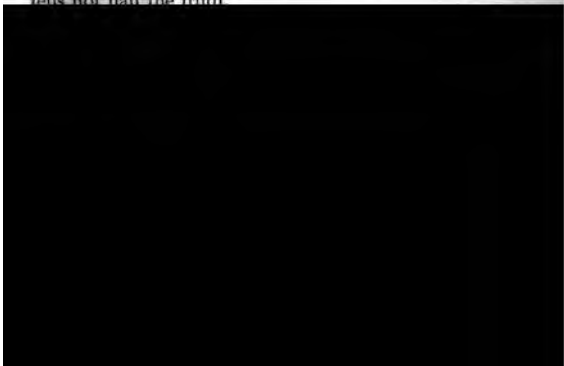
n consider, that *it is hated by God*. "Lying lips are an abomination to the Lord. These six things doth the Lord hate; yea, seven are an abomination unto him: a proud look, a lying tongue."^o—*That the devil undid the world by a lie, and is peculiarly the father of lies and liars*. "The serpent said unto the woman, Ye shall not surely die."^p "Ye are of your father the devil; when he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it."^q—*That lying is numbered with the worst sins*; with fornication, adultery, murder, idolatry, and even hatred of God.^r And that while liars are thus numbered with the most atrocious criminals, it is with dreadful emphasis declared, that they, as it were *above all, shall be shut out of heaven, and endure eternal destruction*." "ALL LIARS shall have their part in the lake that burneth with fire and brimstone, which is the second death."^t What a dreadful emphasis do the words *all liars* bear! It is as if it were said, that the damnation of every impenitent liar is so certain, that if it were possible, which yet it is not, for some of these other classes to be saved in their sins, yet that not one *liar* should. Let it be added on this subject, that quibbling or equivocation has in numberless instances all the guilt of falsehood.

§ 11. Another sin of awful prevalence is scandal. Perhaps no sin is so common, perhaps no sin committed with so little thought, or remembered with less remorse. It is a *sin*, not like some others, chiefly committed by the *open slaves of the world*, and the wicked one; but, alas! frequently by those who profess to follow the benevolent Saviour, from whose lips not one word of scandal ever dropped. This sin is perpetrated in various ways. It is committed, not merely by the slanderer, who fabricates falsehoods respecting his neighbour, but by them who circulate these falsehoods. A tale-bearer comes, and brings some plausible account to another's disgrace. It may be true, it may not; the slanderer seldom takes much pains to inquire, but spreads the report far and wide; and in doing so, gives publicity to the wilful lie of an abandoned liar, and makes himself a partaker of that liar's crimes. If they to whom he relates this account respect him, this adds new weight to the scandal. They spread it farther still, and

(o) Prov. xii. 19, 22; vi. 16—19. (p) Gen. iii. 4. (q) John vii. 44.
(r) Rom. i. 29. (s) Rev. xxi. 27; xxii. 25. (t) Rev. xxi. 8

confirm the account by relating from whom they heard the odious tale. Thus a hundred or a thousand make themselves partakers in the guilt of the first lie, and of all the scandal that flows from the fabrication. But it is not merely when circulating falsehood, that the guilt of scandal is incurred: it is incurred to a dreadful extent, by persons who circulate what may be substantially correct. The backbiter pleads in excuse for his mischievous conduct, "The account I give is true." It may be so; but it is not *all the truth*, or it is *truth misrepresented*, or it is *truth which he has no business to repeat*.

It is not all the truth. Perhaps a brother has fallen into sin. The slanderer hears of it, and away he goes, and like a trusty messenger, bears the news through the whole circle of his acquaintance. It is true that the sin has been committed; but there are perhaps circumstances connected with it, which so far extenuate the guilt, as to call for pity to the offender rather than the severity of censure. All these circumstances however the slanderer takes care to omit. Perhaps the offender fell the victim of a temptation so sudden and so strong, that, thus tempted, his slanderer would have fallen into crimes ten times as great; but of this the slanderer says nothing. Perhaps he has deeply and bitterly repented of his momentary error; but of this the backbiter too is silent. He tells not half the truth.



ans represents the guilt of scandal, as consisting ex- or principally in lying. Whether the statement be lse, if it be calculated to injure the reputation or of another, he who circulates it, except only in cases ty requires the disclosure, is a backbiter. There are ed, in which a disclosure of what is thus known or comes a duty. Thus, to disclose to a parent the mis- of a child, may be of high importance. Regard to ur of religion, and concern for the welfare of a fallen frequently render it the duty of one member of a church, to disclose the criminal conduct of another: disclosure should not be made indiscriminately, but whose office it is to see that Christian discipline and : regarded; and disorderly conduct is checked by of. The common practice of spreading a brother's r's shame, by telling his fault to any or every mem- Christian society, is a flagrant sin; *frequently far an the crime it discloses*. All the guilt of scandal and ig attaches to this shameful practice.

is another common kind of scandal, in which less is frequently more mischief done. The persons guilty : justly denominated whisperers. By half sentences, uations, and affected silence, they disclose the ma- elings of their hearts; and frequently convey ideas se and unfavourable respecting the person they dis- n would be suggested by the open slanderer. It ould be considered, that they who ~~are~~ by listening to them, really become ~~partakers~~ of the ~~same~~ were slanderers universally spurned ~~and~~ who would be a slanderer? but when a tale-bearer's : are readily received, though he who hears them may late them, yet by hearkening to them he inspires the r with fresh confidence, and prepares him more readily d repeat them elsewhere.

short rule well observed will save you from an im- ass of sin: it is merely, when you can say no good ne, unless duty requires you to speak, say nothing. press you with the abhorrence of this most common, us and mischievous, sin, consider,

the tattler is always a liar. They who live in the tale-bearing, are sure with some truths to utter many

falsehoods. Consequently, all that is odious in lying impress you with the evils of backbiting.

Backbiting is as expressly forbidden by God as adultery or murder. "Let evil-speaking be put away from you all malice."^u "Speak evil of no man."^v

Backbiting is the source of innumerable evils. "The slanderer separateth chief friends."^w "The words of a tale-bearer are as wounds."^x "Where there is no tale-bearer the ceaseth."^y Individuals, families, and churches have been ruined by scandal. Wars have been kindled, nations hated, and myriads murdered, through tale-bearing.

Tale-bearing and backbiting are peculiarly the sins of those who have lost the power of religion, and are engaged in their iniquity. Thus the Holy Spirit describes backsliders as "having damnation, because they have forsaken their first faith;" and adds, "and withal they learn to be idle, wandering about from house to house; and not having work, but tattlers also, and busy-bodies, speaking things which they ought not."^z

Backbiting is a sin which is ranked in the Scripture with the most atrocious crimes. In the first chapter of Romans, it is a conspicuous line in the dreadful picture of the wickedness of an apostate world. "Filled with all unrighteousness, enmity, hatred, covetousness, maliciousness, full of envy, murder, debate, deceit, malignity; WHISPERERS, BACKBITERS, haters of God."^a

ey attack persons most eminent for piety and usefulness.exter was represented as a murderer, Doddridge as unjust and time-serving, Whitfield as all that was vile. Even their word was represented by slanderers as a glutton and drunkard. This infernal disposition still exists. There are professors of religion who will represent the principal agents in our noble and Missionary Societies, who are sacrificing time, property, ease, and perhaps health and life, to the diffusion of religion, as designing, self-interested men, whose object is to get some of the money that passes through their hands. Do not such persons show the disposition of him who was the accuser of Job? Is there not reason to warn them to be t—devils?

§ 12. Besides those sins of the tongue which have been mentioned, there is another against which the Christian should watch with peculiar care. It is *profaneness*. By this is not meant the profaneness of the swearer or of the blasphemer, but the light and irreverent use of the name of God in common conversation, and more especially in professed devotion. It is indeed to be hoped, that of those who profess religion, few will profane that venerable name by such irreverent expressions as, Good God! O Lord! Lord have mercy my soul! and expressions like these, lightly uttered in common discourse. But how often in professed prayer, both public and private, and in singing, is that holy name profaned; when God is addressed with solemn sounds upon a common tongue.

This so common sin is a great sin, as it is a violation of the third commandment, "Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain."^c

It is a sin which, if indulged in, subjects the sinner to a dreadful charge of hypocrisy. Thus the blessed Jesus scribed those, who, when he dwelt upon earth, lived in its indulgence, "Ye hypocrites, well did Esaias prophesy of you, saying, This people draweth nigh unto me with their mouth, and honoureth me with their lips; but their heart is far from me."^d It is a sin that deprives the soul of the blessings devotion would obtain, and would render those hours which should be your best hours, your most wicked and your worst.

§ 13. The immense multitude of sins which an ungoverned

(c) Exod. xx, 7.

(d) Matth. xv, 7, 8.

tongue commits, is a reason for watchful care. It truly observed, that "the tongue is a most convenient of iniquity, always ready for use. The sin tongue are perpetrated with ease and delight, every in every place where even a solitary individual can to listen. Hence transgressions of this kind are n wonderfully. The thief steals, and the cheat defrauds sionally only; but the slanderer will slander ever. The formal worshipper will every day, and perhaps times in the day, insult his God by the mockery o The careless singer frequently every sabbath, and often in the week, mocks the Most High.

Above all is the importance of mortifying the sin tongue, inculcated in the awful description given in of God, of an ungoverned tongue. It is wilder than savage and murderous beasts. "For every kind and of birds, and of serpents, and of things in the tamed, and hath been tamed of mankind: but thou can no man tame."e Nothing short of divine power bring it into due subjection. It is venomous as the nomous serpent. "It is an unruly evil," evil as it w essence, "full of deadly poison,"f "The poison o under their lips."g It is like fire, when properly i highly beneficial; but when no longer under restraint terrible and destructive. *The tongue is a fire, and n iniquitous, but a world of iniquity.* "It defileth t body, and setteth on fire the course of nature; an

persons weak enough or *wicked enough* to fall into that it is weak, reasonable persons will allow; that it is weak, the word of God declares.¹

Another sin, often witnessed in some persons that religion, and by which they dreadfully disgrace their religion, is the sin of contracting debts, which they afterwards neglect to discharge. This is a sin which springs from various sources. Often from idleness, and neglect of the duties of a person's calling in life. At other times it springs from pride, and a desire indulged to figure away beyond what a small income will allow. Sometimes it springs from extravagance, and frequently from thoughtlessness. To contract debts, without considering how unlikely it is that they shall be prepared for payment when the appointment arrives. In all these cases, and many others, it is a sin which not only ruins the credit of the guilty person, but which, if he profess religion, brings disgrace, in the view of an *unbelieving world*, on religion itself. This common and disgraceful practice is a *very* wicked one.

a violation of God's solemn precept, "Render therefore unto all their dues. Owe no man any thing, but to love one another."^k The careless or the wilful debtor is continually transgressing these commandments of his God.

highly sinful, as it is an entire and dreadful violation of the Saviour's golden precept, "Whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them."^l This is the (sum and substance of the) law and the prophets.

The debtor who contracts debts which he is careless of paying, would not have other persons treat him as he treats his creditors. His conduct therefore involves the guilt of transgressing wilfully and regularly, perhaps for month after month, and year after year, this important precept of the Lord Jesus Christ.

to obtain the property of another without a prospect of repaying, or, after such property has been received, not to return it with promptitude to discharge such claim, is dishonest, and commonly proceeds from a dishonest principle.

It is therefore a transgression of the commandment, "Thou shalt not steal."^m "Thou shalt not steal."ⁿ The debtor


¹ Lev. xix. 31. Isa. ii. 6; viii. 19. Gal. v. 19. Rev. xxi. 8. xlii. 7, 8. (^l) Matt. vii. 12. (^m) Mark x. 19. (ⁿ) Exod. xx. 15.

who acts this part, is in God's sight a **THIEF**, and must he account for his dishonesty at the last. In too this dishonesty is aggravated by the abuse of confidence and the treachery that are connected with it. The creditor entertained confidence in the honesty of the debtor who has contracted the debt, which he does not endeavor to discharge. This confidence is abused. Had a robber robbed him, he would be robbed by one who never appeared in any guise but that of a thief; but the debtor who misappropriates the property for which he neglects to pay, once appears to him as an honest man, but has treacherously abused the confidence.

This conduct is almost always connected with and the thoughtless or careless debtor is almost certainly a liar. When he purchases the articles for which he is to pay, he promises to pay at a specified time; but his promises are broken. They are repeated perhaps ten or twenty times, and every time they are so many lies. This practice begins with lying, and carried on with lying, and such cases cannot subsist without lying. God says, "Ye shall not steal, neither deal falsely, neither lie to one another."

Conduct of this description is represented in the parable of God as the conduct of the wicked. "The wicked shall not sow, nor shall he reap, nor shall he gather, nor shall he sow again, nor shall he reap again, nor shall he gather again."

As the conduct of the careless debtor brings a sorrow



which have reaped are entered into the ears of the Lord Ithobaal." Where, in the sight of God, is the difference, between defrauding the labourer by keeping back his hire, defrauding the tradesman by keeping back the price of his goods? between building a house by defrauding others of the materials, and dressing out in fine apparel, for which the seller seeks the payment? The dishonesty is the same; and it is unjust in the least, is unjust also in much.

These observations are not meant to apply exclusively or especially to the fraudulent debtor. Persons of that description are not likely to peruse these pages; but, as already said, they apply to those who thoughtlessly contract debts which they have no reasonable prospect of discharging at the fixed time. Or who, when they have contracted debts, exert little or no exertion to discharge them; but with uncertainty, leave their creditors to suffer all the inconveniences spring from their dishonest conduct. To the sorrow of Christians, and to the scandal of a religious profession, persons are sometimes found among its professors.

16. Another sin, which it is to be feared has blasted the moral hopes of many professed disciples of the Son of God, is *covetousness*. Covetousness is a sin confined to no peculiar age; for if it be allowed, that it is frequently the ruling passion of old age, yet it is also often a sin of youth. It is common to persons in no station: the poor and the rich are frequently alike covetous. Nor is it, like drunkenness and lewdness, found almost entirely among those who are destitute of profession of religion; but it has been the curse and the downfall of many that have named the name of the Lord Jesus Christ.

It is an insidious sin. The covetous man scarcely ever has suspicion of his real character. He that robs, knows that he is a robber; he that plunges into drunkenness, when reason forsakes him, knows that he has been intoxicated; but he that is overcome by covetousness, generally has no suspicion of his guilt and danger; but lives, and dies, and perishes in his delusion. Many are the motives which should induce every Christian to watch against this sin.

It is an express transgression of the commandments of the Son of God. "Covetousness, let it not be once named

among you, as becometh saints." "Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, but lay up for yourselves in heaven ; for where your treasure is, there will your heart be also."

As covetousness tramples these commandments under foot and becomes guilty of rebellion against the Lord of life, so it leads to other most atrocious crimes. Balaam's covetousness made him desire to curse Israel, whom God loved. Ahab's covetousness of Naboth's vineyard, caused his murder, and Ahab's destruction. Judas's covetousness led him to betray the Lord of life ; and thus to sell his Master, and damn his own soul, for thirty pieces of silver. The single murders which robbers have committed, the wholesale murders which war has perpetrated, have been for the most part the effect of covetousness. Fatal to individuals and to nations, it is not less deadly to churches and families. A minister of the gospel is one of the worst of monsters, when he withers before him, as life and verdure before a pestilential blast. Demons might walk beside him, and exult in opening schemes of usefulness neglected, and opportunities of doing immortal good slighted, through the freezing influence of covetousness.

The peculiar vileness of covetousness is further seen in *being a sin of the heart, and as such diametrically opposed to all good*. It is not a transient crime, into which the heart falls through strong temptation ; but it is a disposition of the heart, which is effected by the constant indulgence of the

artful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition. For the love of money is the root of all evil."^x "Be not deceived: nor thieves, nor COVETOUS, shall inherit the kingdom of God."^y Awful and decisive declarations! Let not a covetous indulge so false a hope, as the hope of reaching heaven.

Covetousness is a sin not less dangerous than abominable. When once it has gained the rule of the heart, the minister's condition is almost hopeless. Few indeed are the instances of the conversion of a covetous man. A covetous professor of religion is in a state nearly as desperate as that of a devil in hell. This sin so blinds the mind, so hardens the heart, that a Christian minister might almost as well reason with a stone, as with a covetous professor of religion; and might stand on a tomb, and preach to the tenants of the grave, with nearly as much prospect of benefiting them, as there is of benefiting him.

As the covetous have no part in the kingdom of heaven, so the Scriptures command, that they should be excluded from the church of Christ on earth.^z

Think not, however, that the sin against which these cautions are directed, is merely or chiefly that excessive avarice which has rendered a few noted misers eminently infamous.

If this were the case, there would be less probability of being ordered and ruined by this hateful vice. But the Lord Jesus presents conduct much less dark, much less miserly, as ruinous covetousness.^a He does not describe the covetous man as a thorough miser, hoarding up his useless stores merely to gaze upon them; nor as a hard oppressor, who gains his riches by grinding the faces and keeping back the wages of the poor. He does not describe him as one who starves himself and his family to increase his golden heap. His riches were given him by God's bounty; his fields brought forth plentifully. He showed his covetousness, not by the way of acquiring riches; not by gathering in the bounty of heaven; but by the use he made of them. *A mere selfish use.* Instead of promoting God's glory and man's happiness by his abundance, he proposed employing his riches in self-gratification, and God pronounced him a fool.

(x) 1 Tim. vi. 9, 10.

(y) 1 Cor. vi. 9, 10.

(z) 1 Cor. v. 11, 13.

(a) Luke xii. 15—21.

O learn, that not merely the miser, who hoards up his useless gold, not merely the oppressor, or the extortioner, whose gains are the fruits of cruelty and dishonesty, are in God's sight guilty of covetousness; but the honest tradesman, the moral youth, the amiable girl, who look no further than gratifying themselves with what they possess. According to their Maker's judgment they belong to the same class. *Take heed, therefore, and beware of covetousness; of this more common, but not less ruinous, covetousness.*

§ 17. Closely connected with covetousness is love of this world. The sacred Scriptures represent the Saviour's disciples as persons who have little concern with this world; whose chief business here should be to glorify God, and press forward to heaven. Jesus said, "They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world."^b "Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth."^c "Set your affections on things above, not on things on the earth; for ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God."^d

How full, how impressive, are those words of the blessed Jesus, "They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world." This world was no objection of his affection. He slighted its wealth, scorned its treasures, disregarding all its fading pursuits, and all its deceitful maxims. It had no charms for him; its terrors could not alarm, nor its allurements entice him. He acted on it as a stranger come to perform an important commission, and then to leave it for ever. Are you one of his disciples? This world is no more to be the object of your affections, than it was of his. He does not leave it with his disciples as a matter of choice, whether to love the world or not. His words are as positive as they are plain: They *are* not of the world. Nor does he allow them to love it in a smaller degree; for he asserts, that their deadness to the world resembles his. They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. It is true, in the world he did not refuse the few comforts it offered him; but, he partook of them like a traveller, who at an inn may be pleased with the accommodations he receives, but who still feels and acts as but a traveller there. If a Christian, such are you on earth.

This holy deadness to the present world, is described impressively by the apostle Paul; "God forbid that I should

(b) John xvii. 16.

(c) Matt. vi. 19, 20.

(d) Col. iii. 2.

glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by which the world is crucified to me, and I unto the world." Such was the influence of the cross of Christ upon his heart, that the world was crucified to him. It was as unlovely as a crucified malefactor in his view. All its charms were dead, all its attractions gone, and darkness, deformity, and death lowered over its face. He was crucified to the world—he looked upon it with feelings similar to those of a person dying on a cross. How little interest would such a one take in the most interesting and affecting scenes of earth! All that is most engaging in nature might be spread around his cross, and busy multitudes be seen eagerly pursuing the concerns of life; but, the crucified man would scarcely cast one glance from his dying eyes, on all the charms of nature or the bustle of life. All that is most charming would not tempt him; all that is most dreadful would not alarm him.

If you are a follower of Jesus, you too must be crucified to the world, and the world to you. If a Christian indeed, your ease and your home lie beyond the grave; and your heart and hopes are fixed on unfading blessings there. The amiable and excellent poet Cowper, referring to the place in which he became acquainted with the gospel of Jesus, wrote:—"The recollection of what passed there, and the consequences that followed it, fill my mind continually; and make the circumstances of a poor, transient, half-spent life so insipid and uninteresting, that I have no heart to think or write much about them. Whether the nation are worshipping Mr. Wilkes or another idol, is of little moment to one who hopes and believes, that he shall shortly stand in the presence of the great blessed God. I thank him, that he has given me such a deep-impressed persuasion of this awful truth, as a thousand dollars would not purchase from me. It gives a relish to every blessing, and makes every trouble light."

When passing through the world, listen to your Redeemer's bidding you ever look above its delusive scenes. Think of Jesus near him speaking as he once did to Peter, "What is to thee; follow thou me." "If I will that others abound in riches, while thy earthly portion is small, are those thy cares? is that thy world?—What are those to thee?—I will follow thou me."

Thy persecutions are thy lot, but is the servant greater.

than his Lord? shouldst thou be exalted where I pressed? shouldst thou be loved in a world that he If I will that the ungodly flourish through their sin and the righteous mourn, what is that to thee? follow me. I was persecuted. I was afflicted."

Perhaps you inquire, Is it essential to the Christian to die to the world? Indeed it is. "To be carnally is death."^e "If ye live after the flesh ye shall die." that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption. "Love not the world, neither the things of the world: man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him." "Whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world." friendship of the world is enmity with God: whoso be a friend of the world is the enemy of God."^k conformed to this world, but be ye transformed in the ing of your mind."^l What can be more explicit than these solemn passages! They assure us, that where the loved, little as man may suspect the latent enmity actually hated. And this is the case, whatever prof assumed, or however fair a character be borne. "Who will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God." ing the same awful subject, the Scriptures further the minding of earthly things, as the last and darkest that some false professors of religion bear, that they mies to the cross of Christ."^m

As you would escape eternal death, as you desire

mind, a disposition of heart, connected with all that is opposed to God and goodness. This sin also is peculiarly dangerous, because it is peculiarly insidious. It steals into the heart and overruns there, and yet deceives the slave it governs. It kills immortal hopes, it damns the immortal soul, and yet its wretched slave, perhaps, connects himself with a Christian church; professes the religion of Jesus; brings no flagrant disgrace on his profession; yet lives and dies deceived. Were he to become a swearer or a drunkard, his friends would disown him, as dead to God. His crimes would stare him in the face; and conscience at last might take the alarm, and bid him flee from the wrath to come. But the lover of the world feels no such alarm. His disease is more inveterate, more hopeless, than that of the drunkard or swearer, but not so openly flagrant and alarming; it lies deep within. He stands as a member of the church of Christ, or, perhaps, sustains some office in it; or ascends the pulpit, and bids others flee from ruin: yet he is himself a child of hell, for he is a lover of the world. O, my fellow-pilgrim, there is no religion in the heart while the world is loved. If any man, let his knowledge of divine truth be ever so extensive, let his profession be ever so strict, his zeal for orthodoxy ever so flaming, his character ever so amiable, and his standing in the Christian church ever so long, yet, "If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him." All the forms of religion may be assumed, all open sins be renounced, by him, who yet remains a lover of the world. The drunkard may become sober, the lewd grow chaste, the liar true, the pilferer honest, the profane begin to reverence his Maker's name, the sabbath-breaker frequent God's house, and the prayerless learn to pray, and yet this master sin, this treacherous vice, may lie hidden within. And the man, who has undergone the change now described, may be as far from God, and, perhaps, even further, than when he drank in iniquity like water. Then he had some fears that his state was bad; now he thinks that all is right, and yet, because he loves the world, all is wrong.

Perhaps you inquire, How shall this secret evil be discerned? The mention of a few marks of it may assist self-examination.

Love to the world rules within, if, for the sake of profit, ease, or pleasure, you are kept back from accepting Jesus Christ as your Lord, your Saviour, and your all. Jesus said,

"He that taketh not his cross and followeth after me, is not worthy of me."

Love to the world governs in your heart, if, through fear of loss, or injury, you persist in what you know to be sinful. If, for instance, there be in your trade or avocation any thing that you know is inconsistent with religion, and yet, to avoid loss, or secure gain, you persist in following this; by so doing you plainly show, that you love the world more than God and your own soul; that you are no Christian. "Whosoever he be of you that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple."⁽ⁿ⁾

Common reason may further convince us, that love to the world is to be known by anxiety to acquire worldly good, and unwillingness to part with it. He that saves or toils for wealth, that, with what he acquires, he may feed the hungry, clothe the naked, support the cause of religion, and send the gospel far and wide, shows in his industry no symptoms of love to the world; but he, who pursues the same conduct, saves with the same care, and toils with the same assiduity, not to benefit mankind, but that he may heap up a little more for himself and his family;—he who, though he may contribute his mite to benevolent objects, yet gives a contemptible trifle, compared with what he ought to give, and, perhaps, even that trifle with reluctance; he bears the fatal mark of having this plague upon his soul. His assiduity to get the world, and his care to keep what he acquires, demonstrate him a perishing lover of the world.

§ 18. This little volume would far exceed its designed limits, if as much notice were bestowed on every sin as has been on those just mentioned. Permit the writer however to add,

If you would mortify sin, flee from the occasions of sin. Be not bold in venturing into scenes of temptation. "Depart from evil, and do good."^(o) If you love the Lord, "hate evil."^(p) "Enter not into the path of the wicked, and go not in the way of evil men. Avoid it, pass not by it, turn from it, and pass away."^(q) Multitudes, confiding in their own strength, have gone into scenes of temptation; the consequence has been their present, and probably their eternal, destruction. You are taught to pray, "Lead us not into temptation."

(n) Luke xiv. 33.

(o) Ps. xxxiv. 14.

(p) Ps. xcvi. 10.

(q) Prov. iv. 14, 15.

(r) Matt. vi. 13.

at he who wilfully rushes into it has no reason to expect divine assistance to keep him from its dangers; but rather to suppose that God will leave him to himself, to punish his sin and folly.

§ 19. It is not sufficient for the Christian who would honour his profession, to abstain from sin: he is commanded to **ABSTAIN FROM ALL APPEARANCE OF EVIL.**"* So high does the morality of the gospel rise, that it thus positively forbids, under the most awful sanctions, not only what is actually evil, but ALL that has even *the appearance of being so*. There are many things which are not positively sinful, but which have the appearance of evil. These are to be abstained from as carefully as sin itself. There are others, which the well informed Christian may be convinced are free from actual guilt, yet their appearance may be such, that weaker brethren esteem them wicked. These, too, the Scriptures forbid.

Think not that this subject is of little importance. The appearance of evil may as effectually injure the cause of Christ and dishonour God, as evil itself. The mere appearance of evil, by throwing a stumbling-block in the way of others, may as effectually as evil itself harden men in sin, defeat the end for which Christ died, blast the labours of gospel ministers, and ruin immortal souls.—As sin in professed Christians is awfully dreadful, so, as to the mischievous effects, the appearance of sin is the same.

To commit what *has the appearance of evil, is to commit positive sin*. The action itself may not be sinful, but as it has the appearance of being so, the person who commits it as much transgresses a divine law, as he who robs or murders. The divine law says, "Abstain from all appearance of evil," and this law he transgresses. If therefore you would not lie under the guilt of dishonouring Christ, and undoing men; if you would not incur the sin of transgressing an important law of God; you must not merely abstain from evil, but, taught a nobler than human morality, must as carefully abstain from all appearance of evil. If a person could be found, who had never committed what is in itself sinful, yet if he lived in the appearance of evil, in this one way he would commit so much sin, as would shut him out of heaven. He would transgress

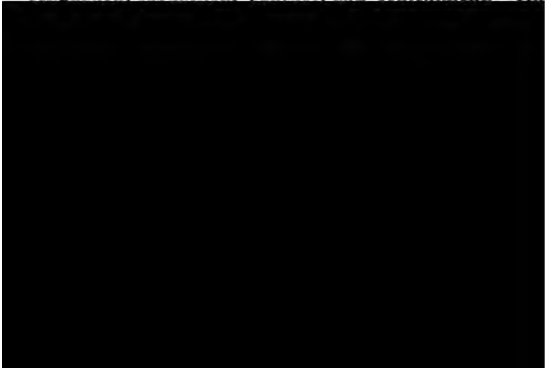
(*) 1 Thess. vi. 22.

the sacred precept, which should be engraven on every heart
"ABSTAIN FROM ALL APPEARANCE OF EVIL." And the
Scriptures have decided, that whosoever shall keep the whole
law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all.¹

CHAPTER IX.

ON HUMILITY, RESIGNATION, PATIENCE, AND CONTENTMENT.

§ 1. **H**UMILITY is a principal Christian grace. It is
essential to the Christian character, that without
religion cannot possibly exist; and to promote its growth
and yield to its influence, is a principal part of true wisdom.
Humility consists in entertaining those lowly views of
selves, which become dependent and mortal, corrupt and
fallible, creatures. It is to be manifested towards God in confession
of sin, in self-abasement and contrition, in lowly reverence,
resignation, submission, patience, and contentment. An



arms of him. In common life pride renders men hard to be pleased. A word, or a look, or some fancied slight, or some want of the respect which pride expects, are magnified into serious offences.

Pride renders men impatient of reproof. The humble will receive with gratitude the faithful reproofs of Christian friends; but the proud resent the kind dealing of those who tell them of their faults. If they cannot deny the faults with which they are charged, pride makes them ingenious in devising excuses for their guilt. Or perhaps they upbraid those who wish to do them good, and say, that whoever concern themselves with their conduct, they have no business with it. On the other hand, pride leads them to love their flatterers, and to esteem them as their best friends.

§ 2. Pride in dress, is the ruling sin in many hearts. This sin is not confined to one age or to one sex. When this sin was bounded in Israel, the great God threatened it with his judgments.*

Think not that it is a matter of little importance, to watch against pride in apparel. Though the Scriptures do not regulate the shape of a bonnet or the cut of a coat, they *do* teach you in this, as well as other respects, to avoid the folly and extravagance of the world. Their direction to Christian females is, "That women adorn themselves in modest apparel, with shamefacedness and sobriety: not with broidered hair, or gold, or pearls, or costly array; but (which becometh women professing godliness) with good works."^b

Pride is indulged in apparel, when our dress is too costly for our circumstances. Pride in dress appears when persons are desirous of imitating in the fashion those who are above their rank, and of seeming higher and richer than they really are. This sinful pride governs in the heart, when, instead of being content with Christian neatness and simplicity, persons are fond of flaunting away in gay and gaudy attire; or when they suffer that to occupy their hearts, and for hours and hours engage their thoughts; when, like an infant, they are delighted at appearing in a new garment, or filling their minds with anticipations of the appearance they shall make.

One most injurious way in which pride in dress operates among the poor is, when they abstain from the house of God,

(a) Isa. iii. 16-18, 24.

(b) 1 Tim. ii. 9, 10. 1 Pet. iii. 3, 4.

because they have not such clothes as they desire. If you who read this book are poor, and have acted this part, be assured it is pride, and only pride, that has occasioned this sinful neglect. Your prayers would not be less acceptable to God, nor your soul less benefited in his house, because your garments were mean and decayed. There is nothing shameful in poverty that sin does not occasion ; but there is much sin in slighting the interests of your immortal soul, and neglecting the house of your God for want of better clothing. This wicked pride, that dwells in the hearts of so many of the poor, deprives them of the means of grace, keeps them from hearing the gospel of salvation ; if they once knew religion, renders them dead and indifferent to it ; if they have not known it, prevents their obtaining the only true wisdom, and at last sinks them down to hell. O, what folly and sin, to neglect the salvation of an immortal soul, because the clothes that cover the dying body are mean and poor ! I have seen with pleasure a poor disciple of Jesus attend the house of God in tattered and worn-out garments, when he possessed no better, and known such a one soon furnished, through Christian liberality, with more comfortable clothing ; who, if he had indulged the pride that many cherish, might have continued at home, his body covered with rags, and his soul languishing, and religion dying, through neglect of the ordinances of God.

; and infernal repinings of envy. Thus Cain first en-
 el, because he was approved by God in preference to
 and afterwards murdered him.

ore infernal passion cannot harbour even in the breast,
 vy ; which looks with dissatisfaction on others' good ;
 mourns their prosperity if superior to its own, and
 eel more satisfied to see them wretched when itself is
 , than to see them happy. Yet, infernal as is this
 it is the sure attendant of pride ; and if not visible,
 ;reatest excesses, still will exist where pride rules.
 ; more common, than to see persons attempting to de-
 the character, or abilities, or usefulness of others, that
 ay not seem superior to themselves ? or to endeavour
 ade themselves and others, that these persons are not
 icious, or virtuous, or happy as they appear ? Envy
 ; this conduct. The humble rejoice in seeing others
 or better than themselves ; but the proud would stand
 t, and envy leads them to endeavour to sink others
 t least to a level with themselves. Beware of envy ;
 exists where it is little suspected ; and they who are
 ted with the human heart, may often observe it peep-
 in the language or conduct of persons, who little
 : what they are indulging and displaying.

is hateful, as it is the parent of discontent with the
 ; of God, and ingratitude for his mercies. On this
 I will insert a few lines that I somewhere met with.
 iter says, " I have trials by perplexities respecting the
 of time ; yet they seem needful ; for they have shown
 e of myself than I knew before. This day or two
 scoveries have led me to enter into Wesley's words :

" God only knows the utmost hell
 " Of the deceitful heart,"

ot know mine. Instead of a submissive, I feel there is
 y within a disposition to murmur. Instead of humi-
 thankfulness for what I have, I can at times perceive
 ; rising, as if others, who deserved less, were favoured
 . A hellish feeling, springing from that pride and self
 abhor, but feel clinging too closely to my nature."
 dispositions which this writer lamented, the proud man
 s. When God chastises him, he is discontented, and
 murmurs, because he thinks he has not deserved the

affliction. When the good he desires is withheld, he repines, because he thinks he deserves more, and receives less, than some others that he esteems more highly favoured. I once knew a man who in affliction declared, that the Lord was not merciful to him; he would say, "Can this be of love?" and assert, that he could not love God, who so afflicted him. He would declare, that he had not deserved what he suffered; that there must be some mistake, and that he must be suffering for the sins of another. The discontent which pride breeds may not often be so openly expressed; but as seen by Him who searches the heart, and knows sin in the blade as well as in the ear, it is doubtless seen as a disposition of this infernal nature.

§ 4. Pride is cruel, cruel as death. Prompted by pride, ambition wades through seas of blood, and sees with unconcern myriads of victims slain, that it may obtain fame or power. Pride is not less cruel in private life. When, for the sake of glitter and show, sums of money are uselessly expended, that might feed many hungry, clothe many naked, and cheer many a broken heart;—when this is done (and what is more common?) pride is cruel. For the sake of a little self-exaltation, it denies to perishing creatures the aid that might else be imparted. How many professors of religion are there that have nothing to impart to the afflicted, and contribute nothing, or next to nothing, to support and diffuse religion, because their pride leads them to spend every spare shilling upon themselves in dress! Their pride is cruel. How many wealthy professors of the gospel spend scores or hundreds of pounds on vanities in their dress, their furniture, or their style of living, to make their fellow-worms esteem them respectable, while they give a *paltry* annual guinea to institutions, that are labouring to diffuse the gospel among six hundred millions of perishing and benighted men! Their pride is cruel. Were it not for this cruel pride among professors of the gospel, how rich would be the funds of every benevolent institution! The silver and the gold would pour like copious streams into their treasuries; but pride and selfishness render them poor; pride that gives a shilling where a guinea ought to be given, and gives a guinea where a hundred or a thousand ought to be imparted.

Pride is false. How many lies are told through pride, by

persons who have sinned, to shield themselves from shame and disgrace. They are not ashamed to sin, but they are ashamed to appear what they really are—the lovers of sin. How many lies are told by persons whose circumstances are pressed, that they may appear more wealthy than they really are. Pride is dishonest. How often do persons, for the sake of finer furniture and apparel than they can afford, contract debts which they cannot discharge! They are ashamed to appear in poor clothing, but they are not ashamed to obtain their neighbours' goods, and really to rob them of their property.

§ 5. The importance and value of humility is strongly enced in the word of God. "Though the Lord be high, yet hath he respect unto the lowly." "He giveth grace unto the lowly."^b "Thus saith the high and lofty One, that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy; I dwell in the high and holy place; with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones."ⁱ "Blessed are the poor in spirit; for theirs is the kingdom of heaven."^k "When ye shall have done all those things which are commanded you, say, We are unworthy servants: we have done that which was our duty to do."^l "Be clothed with humility."^m

§ 6. The Lord Jesus was humble. He left a spotless pattern, that we should follow his steps; and of the glories that attend in that example, none shines brighter than humility. Before he appeared on earth he was in the form of God, and thought it not robbery to be equal with God; but with condescension that has no parallel, he became a man, a man of poverty and woe. When he appeared on earth, he appeared not as the son of a monarch, but of a carpenter; and chose for a birth-place not a palace, but the stable of an inn. Unlike the proud, who think the employments of the lower ranks mankind disgraceful, he most probably laboured as a carpenter. When he commenced his public ministry, he invited not princes or philosophers to convey a message, which angels would be honoured by conveying, but he chose for his disciples a few poor fishermen. With these he associated on terms so condescending, that he said, "I am among you as

(A) Prov. iii. 34.

(i) Isa. lvii. 15.

(k) Matt. v. 3.

(l) Luke xvii. 10.

(m) 1 Pet. v. 7.

he that serveth."ⁿ Unlike those who esteem poverty disgraceful, he was so poor, that when a trifle was demanded from him for tribute, he had to work a miracle to raise even to the value of half a crown, for himself and a beloved disciple.^o Instead of sumptuous fare, he was contented with the plainest food, with small fishes and barley bread.^p No abode was too mean for him to enter; no office of kindness too humble for him to perform; no child of wretchedness too degraded for him to seek his benefit. Though infinitely superior to the angels of heaven, no consequential behaviour ever appeared in him; but the meanest of the mean was not below his kind attention. When the Samaritan woman, poor in circumstances and debased in character, found him sitting by Jacob's well, he freely conversed with the poor wanderer, unveiled the guilty secrets of her heart, and directed her into the way of life. When the centurion sent, beseeching him to heal his servant, with the humility which listens to every call of distress, he immediately replied, "I will come and heal him."^q When parents, anxious for their children's welfare, sought his blessing, unlike the self-important philosopher, who esteems such little ones beneath his notice, Jesus took them in his arms and blessed them.^r Despised as were the publicans, he readily allowed them to sit down with him and his disciples;^s and careless of the murmurs of the proud, said on one occasion to their chief, "Zaccheus, to-day I must abide at thy house."^t He preached the gospel to the poor, and the common people heard him gladly; and unlike those who think the poor and illiterate of little importance, who value churches or congregations according to what they call respectability, he rejoiced that such were his disciples; and said, "I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes."^u Though he might have assumed the loftiest title, he often chose the humblest; and spoke of himself under the lowly appellation of the Son of man.^v The love of fame has been pronounced the universal passion; but he whom angels praise, sought no praise. Instead of magnifying those works of mercy, which deserved the admiration of the world, he spoke of them in the humblest terms. When about

(n) Luke xxii. 27.

(o) Matt. xvii. 25.

(p) John vi. 9, 12.

(q) Matt. viii. 7.

(r) Mark x. 16.

(s) Matt. ix. 10.

(t) Luke xix. 5.

(u) Matt. xi. 25.

(v) John i. 51; Matt. xvi. 27.

raise the daughter of Jairus, he said, "Why make ye this lo, and weep: the damsel is not dead, but sleepeth."^(w) When going to raise Lazarus from the grave, he said, "Our friend Lazarus sleepeth; but I go that I may awake him out of sleep."^(x) And when he healed the Gadarene demoniac, from whom he expelled a legion of devils, he would not permit such a monument to his praise, to attend him from city to city, but said, "Return to thine own house, and show how great things God hath done unto thee."^(y) So far was he from seeking applause, that instead of courting the fame his miracles would attract, he often, though vainly, charged those for whom these miracles were wrought, to tell no man of the benefit they had experienced. At other times he immediately left the place, as when he healed the lame man at the pool of Bethesda. On one occasion he took aside the sufferer whom he cured;^(z) and on another, when his help was solicited, immediately granted it when he saw a crowd assembling.^(a) How different from their conduct, whose pride renders them uneasy, when benevolent actions or labours are not noticed and applauded. Influenced by the same spirit, he sought not his own glory, but his that sent him; and said, "As my Father hath taught me, I speak these things."^(b) No slights, no insults, disturbed the calmness of his soul. When not treated with common civility at the house of a pharisee, who invited him to dine, he manifested no displeasure. When the Samaritans would not receive him; and his two disciples, provoked at the insult, said, "Lord, wilt thou that we command fire to come down from heaven, and consume them, even as Elias did? He turned, and rebuked them, and said, Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of. For the Son of man is not come to destroy men's lives, but to save them."^(c) Though the author of Christianity, and the Lord of heaven and earth, he willingly permitted his unworthy disciples to excel himself, in the splendour of their miracles, and the fulness of their instructions. He said, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do; because I go unto my Father." "I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now."^(d)

(w) Mark v. 39.
(x) Mark vii. 33.

(y) John xi. 11.


(z) Luke viii. 39.

(a) Mark ix. 25.
(b) John vii. 18.

(c) Luke ix. 54-56.

(d) John xiv. 12; xvi. 12.

O, think whose character you thus contemplate—whose humility you thus behold—his in whom every excellency met—spotless innocence, and perfect holiness ;—yet he was humble. His possessions were heaven and earth—his dwelling-place eternity—his servants cherubim and seraphim—his Father the King eternal, immortal, invisible, whom no man hath seen nor can see—his happiness the delights enjoyed in the bosom of the Father ;—yet he was humble ; and when he came to earth, led a life of humility as consummate as his benevolence was boundless. And can you be his follower, and cherish pride ?—pride which sprang up first in Satan's breast. Was he poor ; and will you scorn the poor ? or think it beneath you to enter the lowliest dwelling ? Did he, when a man of poverty, labour for his daily support ; and will you, a worm of the dust, look down with contempt upon a fellow-worm, because he does what Jesus when incarnate did, earn his support by the labour of his hands ? Did he make the pious poor his followers, and rejoice that such were his disciples ; and will you look on piety itself as scarcely deserving notice, if it be united with poverty ? or think that piety in a fine house, and costly apparel, deserves a hundred times more attention, than perhaps much superior piety in coarse clothes and a cottage ? If these are your feelings, how different from those of him you perhaps call your Master. Were he on earth as poor as formerly, you would doubtless be ashamed



nd angels are humble; only devils and fallen men are proud.

§ 7. If more than the example of that divine Friend is requisite to make you humble,

Think what you were; and this one thought, properly indulged, would be sufficient to destroy pride. You were a child of wrath, a slave of Satan, an enemy to God; in the view of God a wretched creature, a malefactor, doomed to an eternal hell; and deservedly condemned to suffer there the death that never dies. You must acknowledge this, or overturn the whole gospel, and set the grace of God altogether aside. Do you, with me, acknowledge this? then of what have we to be proud? Behold a poor wretch, whose crimes are bringing him to the gallows. He has deserved to die. The utmost that human justice can inflict upon him, is no more than he has merited. He has lost his friends, his character, his liberty, and deserved to lose them all: he is about to lose his life, and if it be taken from him, all must acknowledge it is justly taken. Of what has that man to be proud? Let that man by an act of free mercy be pardoned, yet of what has he to be proud? If you are a Christian, you know that you were a lost sinner; that whatever your character may have been in the view of man, in the sight of God it was blasted by the atrocious wickedness of rebellion against him. Of what have you to be proud? You were a slave of the devil, and perhaps passed many years as his slave; can you think of this and be proud? Had God left you to yourself, you would have been a slave of the devil to this very hour; can you think of this and be proud? You delivered not yourself, it was God who translated you out of the kingdom of darkness into the kingdom of his dear Son. You did deserve hell, you were condemned to it; can you think of this and be proud? The most miserable wretch that was ever led to execution, was never a hundredth part so guilty with respect to his fellow-creatures, as we have been with respect to God; and the most miserable death, which the most wicked criminal ever suffered, was not a thousandth part so dreadful, as that eternal punishment which every sinner has deserved. Of what then have we to be proud?

§ 8. When you view yourself as a Christian, you may *doubtless find much to deepen humility. Compare yourself*

with some other disciples of the Saviour. How much stronger has been their faith! What far brighter hopes have animated their souls! How much stronger has the flame of holy love burned in their breasts! With what much closer imitation have they copied the holy Jesus! How much more have they honoured God, glorified their Redeemer, and benefited their fellow-pilgrims! In short, how heavenly have been their affections, how holy their lives, and with how quick a progress have they been pressing on to heaven!—View this, and sink low in humility. Perhaps too this has been the case of many who had few privileges and advantages like yours; who had less knowledge and fewer gifts, and whose natural talents were far below yours. See this, and sink still deeper in humility.

§ 9. Think what as a Christian you should be. How elevated is the Christian character, as described in the word of God. What holiness, meekness, gentleness, devotion, faith, love, peace, and joy, should adorn the Christian! How much should the follower of Jesus on earth resemble the disciple of Jesus in heaven! But is not the likeness in yourself extremely imperfect? Have not you reason to lament numerous defects; to deplore the weakness of almost every grace, and to confess yourself still but a mere infant in religion! Is this the case, and should you not be clothed with humility? and appear robed in it in all your dealings with man, and all your inter-

most exalted sink before him into the lowest depths of self-abasement. The eminently pious Doddridge expressing his feelings, not long before the close of a life of distinguished usefulness and activity, said, "My confidence is, not that I have lived such or such a life, or served God in this or the other manner : I know of no prayer I ever offered, no service I ever performed, but there has been such a mixture of what was wrong in , that instead of recommending me to the favour of God, needed his pardon, through Christ, for the same. Yet I am full of confidence: and this is my confidence; there is a hope set before me: I have fled, I still fly, for refuge to that hope."

Of archbishop Usher it is related, that a friend urged him to write his thoughts on sanctification, which he engaged to do; but when the performance of his engagement was claimed, he replied to this effect: "I have not written, and yet I cannot charge myself with a breach of promise; for I began to write, but when I came to treat of the new creature, which God formeth by his Spirit in every regenerate soul, I found so little of it wrought in myself, that I could speak of it only as parrots, or by rote, without the knowledge of what I might have expressed; and therefore I durst not presume to proceed any further upon it." His friend being amazed at such a confession, from so eminently holy a person, he added, "I must tell you, we do not well understand what sanctification and the new creature are. It is no less than for a man to be brought to an entire resignation of his own will to the will of God, and to live in the offering up of his soul continually in the flames of love, and as a whole burnt-offering to Christ: and oh! how many who profess Christianity are unacquainted experimentally with this great work upon their souls."

Consider further, whence all that is holy in your dispositions, all that is virtuous in your character, has sprung. Not from yourself: you have not made yourself to differ; but may say, "By the grace of God I am what I am." Your defects are your own; but every virtue and every excellence comes from God. To know that you are made a partaker of Christian graces, should call forth your gratitude to him, whose grace has made you what you are; but to know that all these graces come from God should still keep you humble.

RESIGNATION.

men a Christian,* eminent for charity, had conferred some upon an orphan, a lady who received it, said, "When he old enough I will teach him to name and thank his benefactor." "Stop," said he, "thou art mistaken: we do not thank the clouds for the rain. Teach him to look higher, and thank HIM who giveth both the clouds and the rain." When a friend was attempting to comfort the eminently useful Richard Baxter, on his death-bed, by reminding him of the good done by his preaching and writings, he replied, "I was but a pen in God's hand; and what praise is due to a pen." So, whatever you are, or ever may be, God is the source of your graces. Praise should be his, humility yours.

§ 10. RESIGNATION.—To yield all we have and are to the disposal of God; to lie passive in his hand; and to have no will of our own, no will but his, is a state infinitely desirable.

Entire resignation to the will of God, is impressively inculcated in the Scriptures, by the example of various distinguished characters, and above all others, by that of the Lord of life. Eli, who appears to have been a man of piety, but in the management of his family guilty of great faults, when warned of the destruction that awaited his house, acquiesced in the dreadful decision of God: "It is the Lord, let him do what seemeth him good." Job, bowed down with almost insupportable woes, calmly said, "The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord." Hezekiah having offended God, and being warned of the evils that would overwhelm his family, replied, "Good is the word of the Lord which thou hast spoken." An infinitely greater than these, Jesus, displayed resignation still more perfect. When contemplating his sufferings, he said, "Now my soul troubled. And what shall I say? (shall I say) Father, save me from this hour? But for this cause came I into this hour. Father, glorify thy name." When agonizing at Gethsemane, he prayed, "Abba, Father, all things are possible unto thee; take away this cup from me: nevertheless, what I will, but what thou wilt." "O, my Father, if my cup may not pass away from me, except I drink it, thy be done."^k

* Richard Reynolds.
(f) 1 Sam. iii. 18. (g) Job i. 21. (h) 2 Kings xx. 19. (i) John
(k) Mark xiv. 36; Luke xxii. 43, 44. Matt. xxvi. 42.

not improper to desire the removal of sufferings and alleviation of pain, is evident from the Redeemer's example, and it is equally evident, that the Christian in every trial should pray repeatedly and earnestly, for deliverance from every sorrow he endures. But then he still should strive to be in the language of his very heart, Not my will, but thine. These examples of resignation are recorded in Scripture. Think not that this sweet passive grace is only for the adornment of the brightest piety, to shine around a saint. It is essential to the Christian character in every form, and under every circumstance. You are a pilgrim upon earth, love and cherish this grace; especially in the dark and cloudy day of trial and pain, strive to exercise unfeigned submission to the Father's will. Perhaps he may bid you leave comfort for the chamber of affliction;—perhaps he may bid you retire from the scenes of useful, active life, to solitude, languishing, and inactivity;—perhaps he may bid you leave your embrace friends dearer than life, or warn you of a mortal disease, that your sun is about to go down, and bid you:—yet still labour and pray for resignation—submission, the most unfeigned, the most entire, whose object is, It is the Lord, let him do what seemeth him good. Possessed of this, your soul will enjoy a sweet tranquility, the tempest of unruly passions will be hushed into submission, the rebellion of your will to God being subdued, freed from a thousand secret sorrows, that torment the human heart. Peace will take up an abode in your soul, and you will find that it is indeed

“ Sweet to lie passive in his hand,
 “ And feel no will but his.”

suffering is not the only season, in which resignation to the divine will is to be exercised. Daily to yield to the disposal of God, is resignation; and daily to be obedient to his privilege and duty.

PATIENCE is another Christian grace, which the scriptures inculcate upon all the followers of the Lamb. Various seasons for the exercise of patience may perhaps all be considered under three classes. One consists of the painful and trying dispensations of the Most High. Patience in these arduous trials, is nearly allied to resignation. The

dealings of the Most High are often mysterious. "Clouds and darkness are round about him." Afflictions are perhaps protracted, or one trial scarcely ends before another begins. Calamity treads on the heels of calamity, cloud rolls on after cloud, and tempest follows tempest. Then to trust in God needs patience. This patience he requires. "Despise not thou the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of him."¹ "Let patience have her perfect work."² My brother, or sister, follow after patience. Calmly to bear a momentary trial, needs little of this important grace; but to bear trial after trial; to pass with calm submission, and not a murmuring wish, through weeks, or months, or years of affliction; and when the scene is darkest, still to exclaim, "Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him:" this is the spirit to which a Christian should aspire.

Patience is equally necessary to enable the Christian to persevere. It is not enough in the Christian pilgrimage, to commence the journey with alacrity, and to pass through its first stages with pleasure. He who wishes for the Christian crown, must till death pursue the Christian course. Whether the way be rough or smooth, flowery or thorny, he must tread it to the end. Whether the heavens smile or frown, shed beams of exhilarating light, or are clothed in darkness and storms, he must pursue his course. Whether he have many friends to help him on to heaven, or none to assist him

ercise that meekness, gentleness, forbearance, and forgiveness, which are essential parts of the religion of the Saviour. An able writer has observed, that the character which is the subject of the commendation, precepts, and example of the Lord Jesus, is "meek, yielding, complying, forgiving; willing to suffer; silent and gentle under rudeness and insult, aiming for reconciliation where others would demand satisfaction, giving way to the pushes of impudence; conceding and indulgent to the prejudices, the wrong-headedness, the intractability of those with whom it has to deal."*

§ 12. The Saviour does not merely represent such a character as amiable in his sight, but he inculcates the attainment of it upon his disciples. His word says, "Be patient towards all men."^a "Follow after patience."^b "If, when ye love well, and suffer for it, ye take it patiently, this is acceptable with God. Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps: who, when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not."^c "Resist not evil: but whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also."^d

The patience thus inculcated, the divine Saviour exemplified. He bore with mildness the dullness and unbelief of his friends, and the taunts and malice of his enemies. When his disciples contended who should be the greatest, he mildly reproved them, by setting a little child in the midst, and teaching them, that those who would inherit his kingdom must become lowly as that child. When Peter, James, and John slept, instead of watching with him, in the season of his greatest sorrow, he calmly said, "Could ye not watch with me one hour? Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation."^e When Peter wickedly denied him, he only turned and looked on Peter, and by that piercing look reproved him; and though all his disciples forsook him and fled when his death approached, yet when he rose again he said, "Go tell my BRETHREN that they go into Galilee, and there shall they see me."^f When Judas came to execute his treason, he meekly said, "Friend, wherefore art thou come?"^g and when the traitor drew near and kissed him, instead of an upbraiding

* Paley.

(a) 1 Thess. v. 14.
(e) Matt. v. 39-41.

(b) 1 Tim. vi. 10.
(f) Matt. xxvi. 40.
(g) Matt. xxvi. 50.

(c) 1 Pet. ii. 20-23.
(d) Matt. xxviii. 10.

word, his gentle language was, "Judas, betrayest thou Son of man with a kiss?"^u With equal patience did he postulate with other more open enemies, when he said, "By good works have I showed you from my Father, for what of those works do ye stone me?"^v

Perhaps for conscience' sake, you may have to encounter that kind of persecution, which still exists. You may to bear the frown of friends, the ridicule of former gay companions, or possibly even the loss of home. Perhaps you may be threatened with the displeasure of parents and relatives or of employers on whom your support has depended. If this should be the case, let patience have its perfect work. With patience take up your cross and follow Christ. He said, "I say unto you, my friends, Be not afraid of them that kill the body, and after that have no more that they can do: I will forewarn you whom ye shall fear: Fear him, who after he hath killed, hath power to cast into hell; yea, I say unto you, Fear him."^w "Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are ye when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake. Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you."^x "If we be dead with Christ, we shall also live with him: if we suffer, we shall also

of finery adorned his dwelling ! He was content with the situation of a carpenter. He was partly supported by the services of a few pious followers, "who ministered unto him in his substance;"^a and paid a trifle of tribute by a miracle. His most eminent disciple manifested a similar spirit : "I learned in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content."^b

Similar to these examples are the instructions addressed in the sacred Scriptures, to the disciples of the Saviour. "Be content with such things as you have : for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee."^c "Having food and raiment, let us be therewith content."^d "Be careful for nothing : but in every thing by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known unto God."^e "Thou called, being a slave ? care not for it."^f

The admonition given to Baruch is most important : "Seek ye not great things for thyself ? Seek them not."^g By discontented multitudes have destroyed their peace, and, it is to be feared, undone their souls. Dissatisfied with the allotments of the Most High, they have aimed at greater things, and in the pursuit of these have neglected the admonitions of conscience ; violated the precepts of Heaven, and following the shadow of time, have slighted and lost the treasures of eternity. The course of some has ended in disappointment ; others have failed in obtaining the wealth or honour they pursued, and have lost religion and heaven in the pursuit. Many persons, employed in the service of pious families, or in situations where their religious privileges were fully enjoyed, have left such situations for others, where they had much less advantages, but where a few more pounds a year might be obtained. In such cases religion has often died. They have gained a little worldly profit ; but it has been purchased by the loss of everlasting life, and the ruin of an immortal soul. Ah, dreadful profit ! wretched bargain ! deluded and foolish purchasers ! How much happier are they, who, for worldly profits and possessions may be much smaller, who, taught by Jesus, are content with such things as they have, whose home is the skies, whose heart is there ; who live through life as travellers to heaven, and who, having

ke viii. 3. (b) Phil. iv. 11-13. (c) Heb. xiii. 5. (d) 1 Tim. vi. 6-10.
(e) Phil. iv. 5, 6. (f) 1 Cor. vii. 21. (g) Jer. xlv. 5.

sought first the kingdom of God and its righteousness, read their title clear to the inheritance of the saints in light.

CHAPTER X.

GOVERNMENT OF THE TEMPER.—GOVERNMENT OF THE THOUGHTS.—GOVERNMENT OF THE LIPS.—SELF-EXAMINATION.—THE IMPROVEMENT OF TIME.—ON AVOIDING IDLENESS, AND ON DILIGENCE.—ON RECREATIONS.—DUTY TO CIVIL RULERS.

§ 1. **W**HETHER we regard the honour of religion, or the comfort of domestic life, much depends upon governing the temper. Some persons are naturally possessed of a temper kind and sweet; and are thus prepared, when they become partakers of religion, to display its most attractive charms. Others are naturally violent and passionate, or sullen and morose.

IT IS AS MUCH THE OFFICE OF RELIGION TO SOFTEN AND SUBDUE HARSH AND UNRULY TEMPER, AS IT IS TO MORTIFY THE MOST FLAGRANT VICES. Little do they know of the design of religion, and little do they feel of its power, who are insensible to this.

The word of God inculcates meekness and gentleness, and the mild and lovely tempers of the Saviour. "Cease from anger, and forsake wrath."^a "Be ye angry, and sin not. Let not the sun go down upon your wrath; neither give place to the devil."^b "Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, be put away from you, with all malice."^c "Put on, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, humbleness of mind, meekness, long-suffering."^d "Be ye kind one to another, tender-hearted."^e "The fruit of the Spirit is peace, gentleness, meekness."^f "Follow after meekness."^g

(a) *Psal.* xxxvii. 8. (b) *Eph.* iv. 26. *Col.* iii. 8. (c) *Eph.* iv. 31.
(d) *Col.* iii. 12. (e) *Eph.* iv. 32. (f) *Gal.* v. 22. (g) *1 Tim.* vi. 11.

In these important passages, how many weighty reasons are included, for cherishing a meek and gentle temper, and for repressing harshness, sullenness, and passion. If the authority of the infinite God avails, you here have his commands. If a dread of yielding to the wicked one can prevail, he cautions us not to give place to the devil by indulging wrath.

The Most High enforces the necessity of gentleness and meekness, by pronouncing the meek blessed; by declaring gentleness a fruit of the Spirit; and by teaching us, that if we would walk worthy of our holy calling, it must be with lowliness and meekness. Important promises are made to the meek. "The meek will he guide in judgment, the meek will he teach his way."^h "The meek shall increase their joy in the Lord."ⁱ If any thing more were wanting to stamp a value on mild and gentle tempers, it may be found in the declaration, that they form an ornament to the human character, highly valued by God himself. "Whose adorning, let it be **THE ORNAMENT OF A MEEK AND QUIET SPIRIT, which is in THE SIGHT OF GOD OF GREAT PRICE.**"^k

After these testimonies to the importance of mildness and gentleness, think not that the government of your temper is of little importance. A furious, or sullen and sour, professor of the gospel, instead of recommending religion, more effectually teaches men to hate it, than does a drunkard or a blasphemer. And the same authority that condemns drunkenness and the drunkard, declares harsh tempers the fruits of the flesh, and forbids them to the followers of the Lamb.

§ 2. The honour of religion, your own happiness, and that of those around you, depend so much on the daily exercise of mild and gentle tempers, that it may be important to pursue the subject by viewing the example of the holy Jesus. During his life of trials, he manifested unruffled gentleness and meekness. No passion, no resentment, no sullen anger, ever appeared in him. His life was a life of meekness; and when injuriously led to death, he was led as a lamb to the slaughter, and not one angry word escaped his lips. Wrath and passion are most apt to be displayed to enemies. His enemies were many; but he displayed no resentment. When the Jews were about to stone him, he mildly said, "Many good works have I shown you from my Father, for which of those works

(h) Ps. xxix. 9.

(i) Isa. xxix. 19.

(k) 1 Pet. iii. 3.

do ye stone me?"^(l) When cruelly insulted before the tribunal of Caiaphas, he said, "If I have spoken evil, bear witness of the evil; but if well, why smitest thou me."^(m) His friends often displayed much dulness and unbelief; yet he manifested no resentful emotions; but kindly instructed them, or mildly expostulated with them. And for them, when sleeping even during his agony, he pleaded in excuse, "The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak."⁽ⁿ⁾

Would you honour religion, and have your dwelling the abode of peace, copy the gentleness of Jesus; and watch and pray for meekness like your Lord's. By soft words turn away anger; and never, never relax in your prayers and exertions, till your temper is brought into obedience to Christ. *Great occasions* for displaying some of the *splendid virtues* of Christianity *seldom* occur; it is by a *daily* attention to its more *retired graces*, that you must manifest its power. A martyr's firmness you will probably never be called to display; but the Saviour's gentleness and mildness, you are called upon to manifest every day. Not once in your life you may be summoned to prove, by renouncing liberty, friends, and property, that you prefer your Lord to all earthly good; but a hundred petty, yet vexing, occurrences may arise even in a day, to give you an opportunity of proving, that you imitate Jesus's example, and show that you treasure in your heart, and display in your life, his admonitions respecting the loveliness and worth of a meek and quiet spirit.

§ 3. Another often much neglected duty is the government of the thoughts. Thought is the spring of action. Holy affections are strengthened by virtuous thoughts and meditations; and countless sins are committed by the indulgence of impure, or sensual, or resentful thoughts. Think it not therefore a matter of small importance, what are the thoughts which fill your mind during your busy or your lonely hours. Consider that God observes your every thought. "The Lord looketh at the heart;"^(o) "and understandeth your thoughts afar off."^(p) The blessed Saviour^q also asserts, that the greatest crimes may be perpetrated in the secret chambers of the imagination; for "whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her, hath already committed adultery with her in his heart."^(r)

(l) John x. 32. (m) John xviii. 23. (n) Matt. xxvi. 41. (o) 1 Sam. xvi. 7.
(p) Ps. cxxxix. 2. (q) Matt. xv. 19; xii. 35. (r) Matt. v. 28.

the indulgence of evil thoughts is represented as descriptive of those who are hastening to perdition. "The wicked will not seek after God: God is not in all his thoughts."⁷ Hence evil thoughts are declared to be hateful to the heart-searching Lord. "The thoughts of the wicked are an abomination to the Lord."⁸ "A heart that deviseth wicked imaginations, the Lord hateth."⁹ Such thoughts need repentance and forgiveness. "Repent therefore of this thy wickedness," said the apostle Peter, "and pray God, if perhaps the thought of thine iniquity may be forgiven thee."¹⁰ Those who wish for holiness and happiness, are exhorted to forsake evil thoughts. "Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts."¹¹


On the other hand, to indulge pious thoughts is represented as descriptive of piety. "I will sing praise unto my God, my meditation of him shall be sweet."¹² "Blessed is the man whose delight is in the law of the Lord, and in his law doth he meditate day and night."¹³ To have the thoughts frequently occupied with divine subjects, was required from the people of God under the old dispensation; and reason and Scripture may convince us, that it is not less important under the new.¹⁴ The apostle Paul, inspired by the Holy Spirit, directed Timothy to meditate on these things, and to give himself to meditation and prayer. Peter, the favoured disciple of the Lord, glory, not long before he quitted this world, wrote his second epistle, that his beloved friends might be stirred up to love those things which belonged to their eternal peace ALWAYS IN REMEMBRANCE."¹⁵ If after all these testimonies to the importance of repressing evil thoughts, and of cherishing those of a holy and pious nature, more were necessary, we have it in the declaration of the blessed God, that "a book of remembrance was written before him for them that feared the Lord, and that THOUGHT UPON HIS NAME. They shall all be mine, saith the Lord of hosts, in the day when I make up my jewels."¹⁶

To assist in governing the thoughts, it is a highly useful practice in the morning to fix upon some part of the divine word, though it should be but a single verse, which may furnish matter for meditation at leisure intervals during the day.

⁷ Ps. x. 4. ⁸ Prov. xv. 26. ⁹ Prov. vi. 16. ¹⁰ Acts viii. 22.
¹¹ Isa. lv. 7. ¹² Ps. ciii. 33. ¹³ Ps. i. 1, 2. ¹⁴ Josh. i. 8. Deut. vi. 6.
¹⁵ 2 Pet. i. 15. ¹⁶ Mal. iii. 16, 17.

Such a practice will store the mind with Scripture knowledge, will greatly promote pious feeling, and will lead to enlarged views of the wisdom and loving-kindness of the Lord ; every day in a believer's life can be spent with God, every may ; and who at the close of life will regret such exertions to promote in his own soul a spirit of piety, and of preparation for eternal glory ?

§ 4. If you are a Christian, the government of your tongue will be an object of your earnest care. You will not think it sufficient, to avoid falsehood, profaneness, and slander, but all conversation that can pollute the mind, or that tends to excite improper passions or unchristian feelings in others or yourself. " Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, neither foolish talking, nor jesting, which is not convenient ; but that which is good, to the use of edification." Plainly sinful is language calculated to irritate those whose natural disposition may be less calm than your own. In such cases, they who provoke, however tranquil themselves, are guilty of more sin than they who are provoked into rage. As he who *coolly* tempts another to sin, is evidently much more wicked than he who falls by that temptation. Religion also enjoins its professors to guard against unprofitable, as well as mischievous, conversation ; and to endeavour to render their discourse beneficial and improving. Jesus said, " I say unto you, That every idle word that



man."^b Nor is it unimportant ; for in that solemn sur-
 our conduct and character, which must fix our eternal
 ords, as well as actions and dispositions, will be brought
 count, and "by thy words thou shalt be justified, or
 words thou shalt be condemned."

power of speech is an important talent : by it you
 claim the vicious, cheer the sad, guide the bewildered,
 the ignorant, and comfort those who mourn. Im-
 aright, it will be the source of innumerable benefits to
 ; and those with whom you are connected ; but if
 roved, it will heap upon your soul numberless sins, and
 it for final condemnation.

When interests of great magnitude are at stake, how
 as are men to guard against deception ! What care the
 er of an estate employs, to prevent being deluded by
 ficient title ! How watchfully the general of an army
 zes every movement of the enemy, lest by artifice and
 he should be robbed of victory ! But you are en-
 a more important warfare than any on which crowns
 gdoms, life and liberty, depend. You seek a title to
 ossessions than misers ever coveted, or kings possessed.
 ore exceeding and eternal weight of glory. Delusion
 r may rob you of the splendid prize. Self-deception,
 mmon foe, would shut you out of heaven, and sink
 perdition.

e is not so much self-deception on any subject, as on
 onnected with the interests of eternity. The poor are
 of their poverty, the sick feel their want of health, the
 his imprisonment ; but myriads, who are poor for
 , suppose themselves rich in heavenly treasures ; and
 inking into the arms of eternal death, imagine them-
 he heirs of immortal life. The Searcher of hearts as-
 ie cause of such horrible delusion : "The heart is de-
 above all things. Who can know it ?"^k Hence arises
 ortance of frequent and rigid self-examination. The
 Scriptures inculcate this important duty. "Examine
 ves, whether ye be in the faith ; prove your own selves :
 e not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you,
 ye be reprobates ?"^l In that holy book we are also
 to look up to the Searcher of hearts, for grace to purify

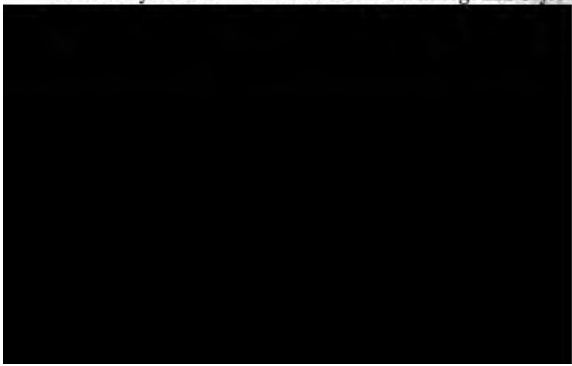
iii. 2. (c) Matt. xii. 37. (k) Jer. xvii. 10. (l) 2 Cor. xiii. 5.

the soul from those corruptions, which after the most rigid self-examination, may still remain hidden from our observation.^m “Search me, O God, and know my heart; try me, and know my thoughts; and see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.”ⁿ The importance of self-acquaintance is strongly enforced by the Lord Jesus Christ, in the parable of the ten virgins. Of ten that set out for heaven, he represents half as self-deceived. Five were wise and five were foolish. And the foolish were *always* foolish. At the commencement of their course they were so; yet such was their delusion, that they never discovered their error till the day of grace had finished. Only when called to meet the bridegroom, did they perceive that they had no oil in their lamps.

That you may not be deceived where eternity is at stake, try yourself as in his sight who will hereafter try you. Frequently examine your own spiritual estate. Mark every symptom which may assist you in forming a faithful judgment of your own condition; and endeavour to form no opinion of yourself but that which you have reason to believe God forms of you.

§ 6. Examine the reality of your conversion, and the sincerity of your repentance. Is your repentance heartfelt? is it universal? do you abhor yourself? do you hate all sin?

Examine your faith. Is the blessed Jesus the grand object



his laws rule, his precepts guide, you? do you *daily* set his example before you? and copy him who was holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from sinners?

Examine your tempers and dispositions. Are you humble, gentle, meek, forgiving, courteous, patient? Not giving way to pride, anger, passion, sullenness, obstinacy; but mortifying those evil tempers to which by nature you may be most prone?

Examine your heart. Keep it with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life. What harbours there? do unkindness, self-conceit, self-importance, discontent? Anger, that fires at a word; pride, that flames into resentment at every real or supposed offence; envy, that repines at another's good; and worldly-mindedness, that grovels in the dust, and grasps at earth more eagerly than heaven? Or are you labouring and praying to defeat and kill all this hellish brood? and cherishing within your breast those sweet graces which angels cherish, meekness, and humility, and gratitude, and love?

Examine your discourse. Do you watch over your lips, that neither impure nor foolish talking may ever proceed from them? that no slander may wound another's mind, or injure another's character? that no provoking language may inflame another's passions? and no unkind expressions pierce and pain another's heart? Is your discourse about even the ordinary concerns of time, such as you would not wish to be concealed from the Saviour? Does your tongue speak its Creator's praise? and direct, or comfort, or encourage, those fellow-pilgrims to heaven, with whom you associate? and do you warn, and endeavour to reclaim, those you see wandering to perdition?

Thus examine yourself, and let not this be a rare and strange employment to you. If your circumstances will allow sufficient leisure, every evening take a review of the departed day. Recollect its faults, that you may mourn and avoid them; remember its mercies, that you may praise their Giver, and lie down considering that your last day will soon arrive, and your body be laid in that bed, where it must continue till the heavens be no more. But if you *cannot* obtain sufficient time for this exercise daily, yet, when the sabbath brings its rest from toil and care, not only wait upon your

God in public, but devote some part of every sabbath to serious self-examination. Consider how the week that is gone for ever has been spent; what progress you are making in your journey to heaven; what duties you have neglected; what sins you have committed; what graces most need maturing; what temptations you have to prepare against; what mercies you have received; and what awaits you in your endless home. An hour thus spent every sabbath will prove an invaluable blessing. Attendance on the most judicious ministry, and uniting in the most fervent public devotions, will not help you materially forward, without such private communion with yourself, and then with your God.

§ 7. Redeem the time.

The sacred Scriptures direct us diligently to improve the fleeting span of life, to live sensible of its uncertainty, and waiting for its end. "Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might; for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave, whither thou goest."^a "Redeeming the time, because the days are evil."^p

Think how much you have to do in time. How many corruptions to mortify! How many graces to strengthen! If you are a child of God, yet how far you fall short of what a child of God should be! and time is the season given that you may grow in grace, and under the forming hand of God be meetened for eternal rest.

How will you value time when you approach the borders of eternity. How will time then appear to have been idled away, that has not answered some profitable purpose. The great end of your being here, is to glorify God, and to secure eternal life. If this be slighted, it matters little whether the reason for which it is neglected be the attainment of a monarch's crown or a day-labourer's hire. Some waste time, and leave the business of life undone, because they are too busy to regard it; others, because they are too idle. Some are tempted by the grandeurs of the world to waste the precious day of life, while from the thoughts of others its due improvement is banished by multiplied cares. Some waste time in airy speculations, which they esteem learning; others on romances, novels, or other foolish trifles, that consume their hours, but impart no useful knowledge to their minds.

(a) Eccles. ix. 10.

(p) Eph. v. 16.

O act a wiser part than they. Waste not that precious time, which must so soon end. It flies fast enough, and when once gone, it is not to be recalled. It is too precious to be redeemed, and too steady to be stopped in its course. Thrones and dominions cannot purchase back one hour of wasted time. Did a voice from heaven every morning tell us how many years, or months, or days, we had to live, we should then perceive how fast time departed, and how soon its end must come; but now one day is so like another, that we perceive no difference, and are not affected by thinking, To-day I am nearer to eternity than I was yesterday. I have one day less to live, and one more to account for at my Judge's bar. Indulge such reflections: let every morning remind you of the great morning of eternity.—It comes, it hastens on. Ah, who can tell how fast!—Let every closing evening lead you to contemplate the close of life;—the period when it shall be said to you, Thy day of service and of grace is no more. Feel your pulse—it beats—what does it declare?—that your time is going; for at every stroke it has one less to give.—Look therefore on time, as time ever coming nearer to its end; and spend its golden moments as in your dying day you will wish to have spent them. As a follower of Jesus, shun as much as possible such upbraiding reflections as these upon a dying bed, or in the eternal world:—My Saviour never spent one idle moment. But, oh, how much of my time that should have honoured him, was idled away!—What far brighter holiness might I have reached!—How much better might I have served my Lord!—How much more might I have done for him, who did so much for me, had I but well improved that time I trifled uselessly away!

§ 8. Rising late in a morning is one mode in which much time is lost. Much has been written well upon this subject. I once saw seven reasons for early rising, which contain much in a little compass. The writer said,

1. "By late rising a deal of time is lost. What melancholy waste of precious time has thus been made in the course of my past life!

2. "Thus a deal of good that might be done is prevented. How much more might I have known of the Scriptures! How many more good books have read, how much better have

been furnished in my mind, had I practised as I once did early rising !

3. "By late rising the soul is indisposed for devotion. I have found it so. Many a formal and thus sinful prayer have I uttered, which might otherwise have been offered in sincerity. Devotion has thus often been a mere task to me.


4. "This formality has often spread through the day. But for this sinful sloth I might have been much more pious, and enjoyed much more of the love of God.

5. "This injures others as well as myself. It makes my soul barren, and thus unfits me to enliven theirs. It prevents my prayers for the success of the word in the souls of others being heard ; for they are hardly to be called prayers.

6. "This deprives me of the pleasure which the early morning affords, and deprives my soul of the comforts it might find in communion with God.

7. "If I am Christ's, how can I thus waste *his* time, and injure his cause. Did he not leave his heaven for me, and shall I not leave my bed for him. Is not God ready to permit me to approach to him, and shall I decline the blessing to waste my hours in senseless sleep or useless sloth !"

It was observed by a pious young lady, that one day we spent condemns a life, so much may be crowded into one well spent day. Of that eminently pious minister, Joseph Alleine, it is related, that if he heard workmen pursuing the



will bestow on you eternal ages of salvation? Can you regret to be always religious, always diligent, always bent on improving time, on honouring Jesus, and growing ripe for heaven? Ah, why what is that long always, compared with your eternity? Let it be as long as it may, yet compared with those worlds of ages, it is but as a thought, or a dream, or a sigh. Soon all the time you have to improve for God will be past. "Few and evil," said Jacob, "have the days of the years of my life been." Few and evil have been mine, may every Christian say on a dying bed: but their labours are past, their work is done, they are come to an end, and I enter an eternity, where days, and nights, and months, and years, are words that have no place. The work of my time is done; but the praises of my eternity will never cease. Happy spirit, that in a few transient days, through grace, secures that eternal blessedness!

Avoid Idleness—Practise Diligence.

§ 9. A sin to which human nature is peculiarly addicted, is idleness. Its evils are innumerable. Both reason and Scripture lift a warning voice against this common and delusive vice. It is truly said, that the idle are found wandering on Satan's ground, and that he finds employment "for idle hands to do." In the word of God, abundance of idleness is represented as one of the principal sins which brought ruin upon Sodom.^(a) It is also described as the sin of those who have damnation, because they have cast off their faith; and as one step in their progress to perdition. "And withal they learn to be idle, wandering about from house to house; and not only idle, but tattlers also, and busy-bodies, speaking things which they ought not."^(r)

The indulgence of this sin is one of the most decisive marks of irreligion. An idle Christian is as much a contradiction in terms as a drunken Christian. This sin also appears to form one of the strongest barriers against conversion, and the enjoyment of salvation. Few of the unhappy subjects of idleness are ever brought to enjoy the grace of God. Less abhorred, and less alarming, than drunkenness, or blasphemy, or dishonesty, idleness is often more destructive. Many a drunkard has been reclaimed, many a blasphemer has been con-

(a) Ezek. xvi. 49.

(r) 1 Tim. v. 13.

§ 10. Perhaps you urge that relaxation is ne

Happy are they who find their relaxation fr
gements in visiting the abodes of affliction,
cating instruction or comfort to the sons an
distress! who pursue even in their least busy mo
end of life; give even their hours of relaxatio
connecting piety and pleasure, can exclaim,

" Lord, in my view let both united be,
" I live in pleasure when I live to thee.

Let your recreations accord with your situa
racter, and your prospects.

Let them accord with your situation. Yo
passing to eternity. By to-morrow you may
Your life is but a span: on that span depends
situation so solemn, it is madness to pursue any
can in the slightest measure be injurious to yo
ests. Yet this must be the effect of many
which the lover of pleasure says, There is no
other evil, they dissipate the mind, they rend
for the exercises of devotion, or the services of
they not merely squander that most precious
but they counteract the design for which tim

tion for eternity, and all tend to render your mind vain and trifling, earthly and sensual.

"No matter which my thoughts employ,

"A moment's misery or joy ;

"But, O, when both shall end,

"Where shall I find my destined place ?

"Shall I my everlasting days

"With fiends or angels spend ?"

§ 11. Let your amusements accord with your character. Are you a Christian in truth ? Then you are a disciple of a compassionate Saviour, and compassion should distinguish you. Any amusement that occasions pain, even to the meanest creature, is inconsistent with your character, and disgraceful to your profession. As a Christian, you are a child of God, a member of his family, a temple of his Spirit, a member of Christ, and a citizen of heaven. And do the vain pastimes of a sinful and blinded world comport with such a character ? Is the giddy ball-room, or the wanton playhouse, the midnight assembly, or the card or gaming table, suited to your situation, and becoming your profession ? Did the Saviour of mankind ever frequent such scenes, or were he on earth would he frequent them now ? Yet he left you his example, that you should follow his steps. Would any one of his apostles (unless it were Judas) have partaken of such amusements ? Yet if there were no harm in them, there would have been no harm in apostles sharing them. And if they were improper for them, they are for you. For the blood that redeemed them was shed for you, and the eternity that awaited them awaits you. Should a Christian, a child of God, be seen standing to gaze at a puppet-show ? or mingle with the clamouring, shouting, swearing, drinking, gambling crowd, that frequent races and fairs, and other worldly amusements ? If the amusement itself were not sinful, to associate with such men is to disgrace the sacred profession of religion. I once knew a man that professed regard to the gospel, that disgraced his profession by an apparent eagerness to witness scenes of worldly sin and folly. If even two blackguards were fighting in the street, he would be one of the first to run and stare at them. Probably he would have excused such conduct by the plea, that he took no part in what he thus beheld ; but the plea would not avail. His conduct betrayed a vain, carnal, worldly disposition, and disgraced the character he bore ; and in the end he forsook religion.

where would you expect to find him? Not in the not in the ball-room, not at the card-table, not employed a few days of his stay on novels or romances, be they ingenious; but cheering by his presence the abodes of grief and sorrow, or recreating his mind with admiring works, and ways, and word of God. And do not expect to be a glorified spirit soon? Are you not a member of the family to which glorified spirits belong? let even your amusements, then, comport with such a character! One simple rule, well observed, will lead you right. Let your amusements be such as an immortal might have partaken of, such as you will not regret in dying moments, nor be ashamed of before the heavenly eternal Judge.

The Christian's Duty to Civil Rulers.

§ 12. The religion of the Bible interferes not with the points of political controversy; but directs its proper course through this world cherishing honour and respecting kings and rulers. "Honour the king." "Curse not the king, no not in thy thoughts." "Render therefore unto Cæsar the things which are Cæsar's."

he sake of plunging into the perplexities and cares, the contentions and tumults, of its inhabitants.

Remember too that governors are, like yourselves, erring creatures, and that it is impiety, not patriotism, to behold all their actions with a jealous eye; to slander their conduct by attributing bad motives to plans that may prove mistaken however well designed; and to indulge a spirit of antipathy to them whom God commands you to respect and honour. To be presumptuous and self-willed, and to speak evil of dignities, are traits in the character of those who shall utterly perish in their own corruption.

§ 13. To take a warm interest in the political discussions of the day, is in many respects unsuitable to a follower of the Lamb. It is inconsistent with the character of a pilgrim, journeying to a better world. It is highly injurious to the best interests of the soul. Religion languishes or dies in the heart that is continually agitated by political subjects. No snare appears more dangerous, none more destructive to vital piety, than this. Nor has the Christian reason to expect much from a world at enmity with his Father and his Saviour. The late Mr. Scott observed, "I trust I speak as a Christian minister, when I say, that toleration and protection are all that God's servants can reasonably expect in the devil's world.—A world of which the devil is styled the *god and prince*.—And in fact this is all they should desire."

§ 14. The sound of liberty is often enchanting to a young mind. If you have been bewitched by this enchantment, seriously sit down and think, what liberty you wish your governors to grant you, that you do not possess. Surely not the liberty of doing ill, and as for the liberty of doing well, do you not enjoy it as completely as you desire? May you not go where you please, and when you please; and, so that you injure not others, do what you please? Are you not protected in the enjoyment of your religious rights? Would the infidel ranters after liberty afford you such protection? Would they not rather, as they did in France, persecute the disciples of the Saviour? Be thankful to God for your privileges and blessings, and respect the sovereign whose family has protected our religious rights for one hundred and twenty years; and view politics but as you would view a country, through which you pass rapidly, never to see it again. You have

higher things to mind than the bustle of trading world. Leave the dwellers in the valley to grovel in its mists, and fogs, and mire, and do you press onward to that brighter world, where sunshine rests, and where all the air is love. Do not to be agitated and perplexed by the political day, think, What will these things be to me hence? and what will they be in those infinite ages, and that lie beyond the period when this world itself shall be no more?

CHAPTER XI.

ON THE CHOICE OF COMPANIONS AND OF

§ 1. **T**O pass through time as a traveller to as you would wish to die, is, if it be your duty and happiness. Thus may you pass time "by gales of blessing driven." Thus may you live, and enter the dwellings of the blessed joy upon your head. Yet, till that importunate day be finished, many are the snares that would rob you of your feet, many the foes that would rob you of your

Of all the snares to which the Christian is exposed, the most fatal, the most ruinous, are those which arise from improper companions. These are often the most successful instruments for entangling an angel, some who once bid fair for heaven.

To have no intercourse with those who are *not* of the religion, is in the present state of things imperative. *then must you needs go out of the world."*

So to seclude ourselves from the world, and to seize the opportunities for doing good to the bodies of

may be perishing in sin around us, would be conducted to both the precepts and the example of the holy

represent religion as dividing the bands of natural affection, teaching the pious child not to love an ungodly parent, separating the affections of brother and sister, wife and husband, would be a dreadful perversion of the Christian religion on the important subject of this chapter. Religion teaches its friends to embrace and seek opportunities of good, even to the most lost and debased of their species, and inculcates upon them the strictest attention to the duties and charities of domestic life: yet, with equal plainness and solemn authority, the God of the Bible forbids his children selecting their bosom friends and intimate companions, among those who are strangers to his grace.

The word of God expressly forbids associating with ungodly companions. "Enter not into the path of the wicked, nor stand not in the way of evil men. Avoid it, pass not by it, from it, and pass away." "If sinners entice thee, consent not. My son, walk not thou in the way with sinners: refrain thy foot from their path."^b "Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship have righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness?"^c

The Most High thus forbids intimate friendship between children and the followers of the world, so his words are with weighty motives for obedience to these commands. It describes those as blessed who avoid irreligious companions. "Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful."^d To avoid the society of the vain and worldly is represented as characteristic of real piety. Avoidance from the evil is also described as necessary if we would walk in the paths of piety. The Psalmist said, "Depart from me, ye wicked men; for I will keep the commandments of my God."^e As if he had said, I cannot keep those commandments and associate with you; but I will keep them, therefore we must part. On the other hand, to cherish intimate acquaintance with those who are strangers to religion, is

(b) *Prov. iv. 14, 15; i. 10, 15.*
Ps. i. 1.

(c) *Ps. cxvi. 2, 4, 5.*

(c) *2 Cor. vi. 14, 17.*
(f) *Ps. cxix. 165.*

represented as the way to destruction. "fools shall be destroyed,"^s And such as meeting the divine displeasure. Thus, hoshaphat had contracted an unholy friendship with him, "Shouldest thou help the ungodly who hate the Lord? Therefore is wrath upon the Lord."^s The history of Lot affords instructing examples possible, of the effect of evil company. Abraham departed from his country at G. accompanied him, and probably then with a similar spirit of devoted piety; but when he saw the fertility and beauty of the plain of Jordan, and the cities of that plain, how dire was his fate. His family perished at the burning of Sodom, his daughters, infected with all the depravity, debased their father, by rendering him a partaker with him the most atrocious iniquities. The parents of a guilty and idolatrous race, upon record, a monument of the bitter fruit of evil company, for the sake of temporal advantage.

§ 3. But you may inquire, What company is that only of the profligate and profane, and abandoned; but that of all those who are without piety. The vain, giddy, thoughtless multitude, who neglect the interests of eternity, and live without regard to God, however moral in their conduct, or amiable in their associates that would be ruinous to you.

There is no snare by which young people are more likely to be undone than by this. Therefore to shun this snare, consider its nature, that evil company is the root of all evil.

Should you make any that are strangers your bosom friends, you will most probably ruin them. If they are lewd and debauched, you will partake of the same guilty excesses. Though at times you tremble at their abominations, you will secretly partake of their crimes. If you are infidels, though you may think your faith unshaken, you will soon find your confidence shaken.

hopes decline, your value for the gospel and religion lessen, and will go on step by step, till, Jesus and salvation forsaken, you sit in the seat of the scorner. But if your companions are of a less openly wicked kind, yet their influence and example will be immensely and eternally mischievous to you. Religion will languish and decline. When you see your favourite friends neglecting that one thing needful, and perhaps representing devout attention to eternal things as silly enthusiasm, you will most probably imbibe their spirit. At first perhaps be silent, then laugh with them at what they deem preciseness, then venture on the sinful follies they call harmless pleasures. Your soul will grow cold and dead to the Saviour and his love. With such companions you will learn to profane your sabbaths. Devotion will become burthensome, and then perhaps be altogether neglected. Your mind will be alienated from its sacred exercises, and have no longer any relish for its pleasures. Can you imagine that when you have spent perhaps your evenings with those whose chief concern seems levity, laughter, and silly mirth, you can retire to read, to meditate, and pray? Ah, no: the duties of devotion will become a burthensome task; its most important exercises dull and tedious; your heart will be estranged from God, and fixed upon your beloved but vain and destructive companions. With them too you will incur the heavy guilt of wasting many precious hours—hours given you by God to secure a happy eternity—hours which, when this scene of vanity is ending, you would give worlds to purchase—those precious hours you will squander away in idle conversation and silly mirth.

§ 4. But if you associate with worldly companions, you will not stop here. When you have lost the power of religion, you will most probably go on from sin to sin. Perhaps, as thousands have been, may be drawn into crimes, which may ruin your reputation, blast your prospects, destroy your comforts, or even shorten your days. If this should not be the case when drawn aside from religion, there will be little hope of your ever enjoying its blessings again. Few backsliders are restored. You may live forsaken by God, with a heart hardened in impenitence; by your example you may train up your children; and at last, without hope meet death, and under the frown of your Judge enter eternity.

Then those thoughtless creatures that were your beloved

companions upon earth, will be your companions in hell. As you chose their company on earth, you would have it there ; but there no longer beloved. In those seats of horror, darkness, and despair, the giddy and the profligate must meet—

“ For know, the law that bids the drunkard die,
“ Is far too just to pass the trifier by.”

But their hours of sinful pleasure will then be past ; their delights will have reached an eternal close ; their laughter at religion, and their cheerful songs, will be terminated, and all that rendered their intercourse delightful will have come to an eternal end. Then will be fulfilled the dreadful declaration, “ The companion of fools shall be destroyed.”

§ 5. Were you sure that you should not be drawn altogether from religion by worldly companions, yet there would be many reasons to forbid such unhallowed intimacies. Surely it is no inconsiderable evil, to have religion languish, and the soul rendered dull and drooping in its spiritual pilgrimage, yet this must be expected. “ Throw,” says Mr. Bolton, “ a blazing firebrand into the snow or rain, and its brightness and heat will be quickly quenched ;” and thus will it be with the Christian, who takes pleasure in mingling with the followers of the world. The fervour of his zeal will be cooled, the fire of his love will be quenched, and a universal decay of grace will insensibly steal upon him.

All that are strangers to converting grace, have the carnal mind, which is enmity against God ; and “ shouldst thou love them that hate the Lord ?” Should you take your chief pleasure in those, in whom God takes no pleasure ? Should you find your chief delight in them, who have no delight in your Saviour ? and in whom he has no satisfaction ? Is it right that they should have your heart, while the world and the wicked one have theirs ? What though their friendship should not be ruinous to your best interests, yet what pleasure should you find in them, who are hastening to eternal death ? Shortly there must be an eternal separation between the children of this world and the children of light. They must soon part, and part for ever. As thus after a moment of time they must separate, and never, never meet again, it is best for the Christian to begin this separation now, and not to set his heart and affections upon those, who soon must be torn from

n, and placed at an impassable distance through all eternity. It is best for the Christian to form those friendships now, which may be renewed in heaven, and perpetuated for ever and ever.

§ 6. Choose those therefore for your friends, who are the friends of God—friends that will be friends for ever. They will sympathize with you in your sorrows, the worldly cannot; they may obtain blessings for you by their prayers, the y and thoughtless would gain you none, but rather deprive you of the blessings your own prayers might obtain. They could do you good in your pilgrimage, and you might indulge the comfortable hope of meeting them in heaven, and joining them there in all the noble employments and exalted pleasures of that happy, holy world. How much better, how much happier, to travel to heaven with beloved companions, heirs with you of the grace of life, than to have associates that are without hope, without God, and without Christ!

Besides all these motives for shunning evil company, the blessed God has graciously furnished a motive, wonderfully clearing and encouraging. He promises you his own friendship, if you renounce the friendship of the world. When he says, "Come out from among them, and be ye separate," he graciously adds, "And I will receive you, and be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters." With such a promise proclaimed in your hearing, can you hesitate whether to choose the friendship of God, or the attachment of men, perhaps amiable, but perishing, creatures? His friendship for eternity, or theirs for an inch of time? His that would bless you with eternal life, or theirs that would rob you of that prize, and sink you in destruction? His favour, that would fill your soul with present peace, and enrich you with blessings that will be enjoyed without intermission through an eternal day of glory; or theirs, which when it does its utmost, can but please a few short hours with vain mirth, that is, like transient blaze, followed by eternal darkness?

On Marriage.

§ 7. As wisdom in the choice of companions is thus important, still more important is the exercise of Christian wisdom in the choice of a companion for life. There is no sub-

ject on which many professors of religion are to the rules of duty, as on this ; and the consequences of their sin and folly. It is that union, which death cannot break, it with one who is a stranger to the world contained in this chapter can be said : "The die is cast, and cast for life." and pray, that you may not be drawn into a destroyer. Endeavour to act the Christian ; pray for the eternal welfare of him, or of dear to you as your own life, but who dear to God, but perishing in sin. Will should you behold the friend of your bosom, your heart, no sharer with you in even one dear to you through nature's ties, but an enemy. With what sorrow should you think, that travelling with you the journey of life, its comforts, has no inheritance in your life ; journey of life ends, must be separated from you more through all eternity ! How fervent prayers, how watchful your conduct, that lead this dear, but perishing, friend, to you and peace, and pardon !

§ 8. But if you have not entered into religion, as you love your soul, as you regard value the favour of your God, never form any one, however amiable, however more with the gifts of fortune or nature, who lower of the Lord Jesus Christ.

This advice may be enforced by reason and momentous.

§ 9. Marriage between those who part and those who are strangers to religion, Scriptures as the source of the greatest evil matches are abundantly condemned. A usually attributed to several verses in the hallowed marriages are represented as the full wickedness, which occasioned the deluge by the general deluge. It was when that for their wives the fair but impious daughter of iniquity of man became so great as to

judgment from a patient and merciful God. These wicked connexions matured human depravity, filled up the measure of man's iniquity, ripened a world for impending vengeance, banished the last lingering traces of piety from almost every heart, made this earth a scene of dreadful desolation, and hurried multitudes to the pit of eternal night. When the world was repopled, the same cause produced in smaller degrees effects not less deplorable. What made part of the daughters of Lot slight God's gracious warning to escape from perishing Sodom? They were married to some of its depraved inhabitants. What rendered those who did escape such monuments of impurity? Doubtless they had contracted this among those with whom they had too long conversed. What rendered Solomon, the wisest of men, an idolatrous fool? What made him, once so favoured by God, once so devoted to his duty, an impious apostate, a worshipper of pagan abominations? "His wives turned away his heart after other gods, and he went after Ashtoreth, the goddess of the Zidonians; and Milcom, the abomination of the Ammonites; and Chemosh, the abomination of Moab; and Molech, the abomination of the children of Ammon."¹ The piety that erected God's most splendid temple, the wisdom that nations admired, could not shield him from the accursed influence of unhallowed connexions. When we see the wise Solomon become a raging infatuate apostate, bowing at an idol's shrine, because a impious wife adored that idol, need we wonder when we see professors of religion, that marry unbelievers, joining in the sins and follies that please an ungodly wife or husband? and going like an ox to the slaughter where Satan leads them? What aggravated the crimes of impious Ahab, who sold himself to do wickedness in the sight of the Lord? Jezebel, his pagan wife, urged him forward in his career of iniquity.^k

§ 10. The word of God not only represents such unhallowed unions as dangerous in the extreme, but expressly and absolutely forbids them. They were expressly forbidden to Israel of old.¹ The reason of the case might sufficiently prove, that what was thus offensive to God under the lax dispensation of Moses, could not be less offensive under the more spiritual and holy dispensation of the gospel. But we are not left to

¹ 2 Kings xi. 4, 5, 7. (*h*) 1 Kings xxiv. 25. (*h*) Deut. vii. 3, 4. Neh. xiii. 26, 27.

believer is permanently united to one in the close connexions. Instead of being separate, a union is formed, where the interests, hopes, cares, fears, pains, and pleasures of the parties, are all intimately and *mingled for life*. What can be more glaring against the Majesty of heaven? What more wilful of the giver of this law?

The same law is given in expressions equally de another occasion. When the liberty of a female is declared, it is said, "She is at liberty to be married she will, **ONLY IN THE LORD.**"^m All considering property, or age, or temper, or health, or are left to the prudence of the parties; but this one God lays down, the believer must marry no one w in the Lord. The expression, in the Lord, is too co the Scriptures for its meaning to be mistaken. It signifies a person who is a partaker of saving grac disciple of Jesus, a humble child of God. Among stances in which it occurs are the following: "Tim beloved son, and faithful in the Lord."ⁿ "Are n work in the Lord."^o "I count all things loss, th win Christ, and be found in him."^p "If any man be he is a new creature."^q "There is no condemn

ble. How many thoughtlessly intertwine their affections with those who are utter strangers to the face—clasp in their arms the children of the wicked—give their hearts to those whom Satan rules.

O you, if in any danger of insnarement, against this and destructive sin, consider that it is a great sin, a sin dyed with wicked ingratitude. God is the giver of the law, which forbids your being yoked with an unbeliever, which allows you to marry only in the Lord. Do not you under the greatest obligations to obey your God? Are not you under the strongest ties to love him? Are not you bought with that price, precious and inestimable, the blood of Christ? And are not you directed to do ever you do, "to the glory of God?" Should not you yield your heart to him who has so loved you? To him who to this he gives the most gracious promise possible will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters." Of what ingratitude would you be guilty, to break such a promise given by such a God, you trample upon his righteous law!

To break this law has all the guilt of rebellion against the authority of God. Idolatry, fornication, or adultery would esteem great crimes; for God abhors and punishes those crimes, but God as truly forbids unhallowed marriages; and they who marry strangers to religion, as truly disobey God, as they who lead lives of unlicensed lewdness. A marriage committed by a believer in such case, is much aggravated by its being a wilful and deliberate sin. It is not a sin, like Peter's; it is not a crime committed unawares, in which persons are hurried in a moment of impetuosity, but it is a *deliberate and wilful crime*. The young man, month after month, pursues the object on which he has his affections, though he knows that whatever charms she has, she has not that one which excels all others, the charm of humble piety. The young woman, month after month, receives the addresses of her lover, though she is aware, that ever worth he may possess, he is not a disciple of Christ of God. Thus the rebellion against the authority of God, wilful and continued, and month after month, and year after year, is the Most High insulted, by behold-

(d) 1 Cor. x. 31.

obtain acquaintance, go into the world to look for
panion of their days, and fix upon a person who is
to the religion of the gospel, their conduct is flagra
minal. It admits of no palliation or excuse. *It*
hardy, undisguised rebellion against the Lord o
and earth.

If the motives that lead to these unhallowed unio
amined, the guilt of those who contract them wi
lessened. In the least guilty it may be a rash and th
affection. To those who are thus influenced it may
Shouldst thou love them that hate the Lord? Su
professors of religion, who out of love to a fello
trample on the authority, and wilfully violate the la
Lord of heaven and earth, plainly show that God
first in their affections, that the Saviour does not rul
in their hearts. They show that they prefer the
their choice to God and Christ, and thus, that in res
are joined to idols.

But many enter into such unlawful marriages, fro
fluence of other merely sordid motives. These see
liar personal attractions in the objects of their
choice; but they have more money than some, tha
other respect are their superiors, and who unite true

marry strangers to religion, as truly break God's
the motive is the same, money is the motive. This
them for their sin. They trample on God's autho-
ise they hope to be paid for doing so.

Such being the guilt of entering into one of these
marriages, it is not surprising that such conduct
followed by effects mischievous in the extreme.
too cunning for God. Whatsoever a man soweth
he also reap.

ls are numerous. In many cases the total loss of
e deplorable effect. In these sad cases the professor
gains the object of idolatrous affection, or acquires
ty thus sought, but it is at the dreadful price of eter-
ness, and the ruin of an immortal soul. Many who
ared promising fair for heaven, when united to fol-
the world, have forsaken the path of peace. Some
eir unbelieving partners the decided enemies of re-
thers gradually imbibe the spirit of those with whom
united. These tempt them to join in pleasures that
abhorred; to neglect duties that they once loved;
the sabbath; to neglect their religious privileges;
their pious friends; to mingle with associates averse
nd to join with them in scenes of dissipation. Gra-
it too surely, the blighting, blasting influence of the
union is felt upon the soul. Religion languishes—
and dies. The day of their marriage is the day
be seal to their eternal ruin. According to the lan-
the divine word, they marry, "having damnation,
ey have cast off their faith."

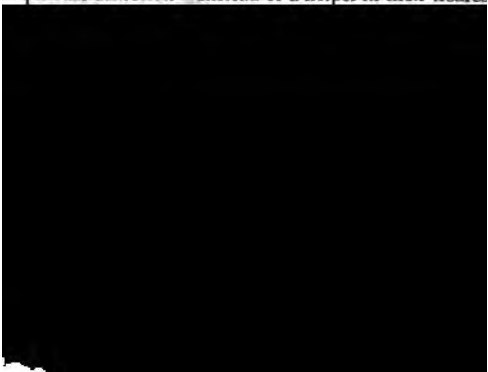
Perhaps if you, who now read these pages, are inclined
uch a forbidden union, you are deluded with the
ringing the object of your attachment to the ways

Alas, this is but delusion! It is not in your power
another's heart, and you have no reason to hope
will *reward your sin* by granting you the object of
es. When persons have been converted after mar-
many cases husbands and wives have been the means
; their respective partners to embrace religion also.
has blessed them and their endeavours. But when
knew religion have married those who knew it not,

(d) 1 Tim. v. 11.

seldom if ever do we see the unconverted party a converted. In numberless instances the professor of is drawn away from God, and back to the world and tion ; but in few cases indeed do we behold the u drawn from the world and led to God. If this is y c it is delusion.

§ 15. In some few cases total apostasy is not th quence of these unnatural marriages ; but in these c are often the cause of much unhappiness. Much distress is often their bitter fruit. It appears from passages of Scripture, that sometimes when God for sins of his own people, so far as to shield them fr punishment hereafter, he lets them feel painfully the their sin and folly while here. Thus, though David's was forgiven, the sword was never to depart from h Acting apparently upon this system, the Most High fr punishes professors of piety, who form these forbidde They expect happiness, but he bids sorrows encirc distress and affliction in various forms, and pover them. Their expectations are disappointed ; their h and though their hope for eternity is not lost, for t see little before them but difficulty and sorrow. frowns upon them, and marks his displeasure of their other times their distresses are of another nature. ' spiritual distresses. Instead of a helper in their neares



the child, one of whose parents follows the Saviour, and the other the world? How painful must it be to a father or mother who feels the value of an immortal soul, who knows the Saviour's love, and anxiously desires that a beloved family of children should know this also, to think, By marrying contrary to the will of God, I have I fear entailed eternal damnation on all my dear but thoughtless children.

§ 16. Those who cavil against a divine law, because they are unwilling to submit to its restraint, invent various objections against the preceding statements, or excuses for rebelling against the authority of the Most High. Some plead that the unbelieving party may receive spiritual benefit, and urge the apostle's words, "What knowest thou, O wife, but thou mayest save thy husband."

Ans. A reply to this objection has in fact already been given. The good done bears no proportion to the mischief. Few strangers to religion are brought to embrace it, by marrying those that professed to enjoy its power; but many that professed religion, are led to forsake and renounce it, by entering into such forbidden unions. The words, "What knowest thou, O wife, but thou mayest save thy husband," refer not to a case of this kind, but to those cases where, of those persons who are equally strangers to religion, one party after marriage is brought to embrace it. In these cases the wife or husband, when converted, often becomes the means of converting their respective partner; but it is not so in those cases where professed disciples of Jesus violate his laws, by marrying those who know him not.

Obj. 2. Still it may be said, in some cases the happy result of a friend of religion marrying an amiable person, who knew not its power, has been the conversion of the unbelieving party.

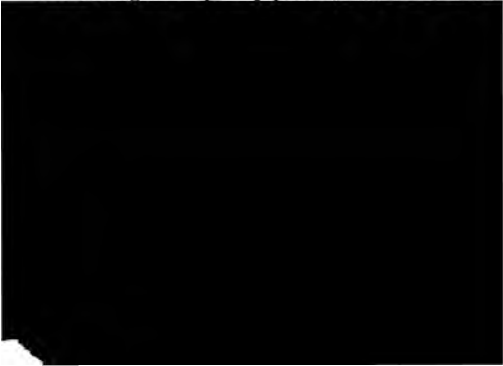
Ans. Allowing this in some instances to be true, it forms no justifiable reason for violating a plain divine law. The principle maintained in this case, is neither more nor less, than 'Let us do evil that good may come.' The good expected may never come, yet if it were certain that it would, the sin of breaking God's holy law is not thereby lessened. Of those who do evil that good may come, it is said, "that their damnation is just."^a I recollect reading of a thief who stole a

(a) Rom. iii. 8.

Bible, or other religious book. This book proved the instrument of his conversion; but would any one argue, it is sinful to steal Bibles because they may convert the thief? Would they not rather acknowledge, that the honest action retained all its criminality, whatever its effect? It is the same in the present case. Whether an unbelieving party be converted to God, or remain unconverted, the believing party has incurred the guilt of wilfully assuming the authority of the Majesty on high.

Obj. 3. It is further objected, that so much difference exists between a nominal Christian and a heathen, that what is applicable to the latter will not be so to the former.

Ans. In reply we may inquire, Wherein does the difference exist? Not in their state in the sight of God. Both are children of wrath. Not in their enjoyment of spiritual gifts; for neither has any. Not in the state of the soul. The nominal Christian as much needs conversion, as the heathen, and is as unable to be saved without it, as the heathen. That one needs less grace than the other for salvation, the nominal Christian cannot be saved, unless born again by the Spirit of God, and with that great change the heart is renewed. In fact, in many respects the balance turns in favor of the heathen. The nominal Christian has heard the gospel, and slighted its message; the heathen has not. In one respect of religion is plainly proved, that there would



CHAPTER XII.

ON FAMILY DUTIES.

A VERY considerable portion of human happiness depends on the members of a family cherishing the sentiments, and practising those duties, which spring from the relations of domestic life. The religion of the gospel is designed to diffuse peace, love, and harmony through the family circle; to soften every rugged passion; to strengthen every affectionate feeling; and to open in each house, as well as in each breast, a little heaven." There are persons who abroad appear courteous and humble, gentle and good-natured, but at home are harsh and passionate, proud or peevish, soon provoked, and easily offended. It should never be forgotten by you, that true piety should be shown at home. Let the family that has daily converse with you, behold its brightest luster. Thus Jesus acted; Judas, who knew him best, and who followed him in his retired hours, had not one charge of folly or inconsistency to bring against him. How different from those who are his professed disciples, who are esteemed abroad, but not at home; loved as Christians by those who know them least, whose profession is doubted or scorned by those who know them best.—Hypocrites in reality, that have given rise to the proverb, "A saint abroad, and a devil at home." The religion of Jesus, however, is not answerable for the hypocrisy it condemns. The true disciples of the Saviour will act a very different part. There is no scene in which the all-important graces, meekness, humility, gentleness, courteousness, are more important than at home. There is no situation in which watchfulness over your words and tempers is more necessary. There are many little things which will occur to vex and irritate; there you are more liable to be off your guard, and thus more liable, by your improper tempers and hasty words, to bring sin upon your

to maintain a conscience void of offence towards all you. The Scriptures however descend to direction minute, and peculiarly expressive.

§ 2. Duties of parents.

To instruct their children in divine truth. words, which I command thee this day, shall be heart; and thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up."a Teach them thy sons, sons' sons."b

By needed correction to restrain them from evil. hold not correction from the child; thou shalt beat him with the rod, and shalt deliver his soul from hell."c Eli pious, fell under God's dreadful displeasure, because he made himself vile, and he restrained them not."d

Not to discourage or provoke their children. "provoke not your children to wrath."e "Fathers, do not provoke your children, lest they be discouraged."f

To love their children, and to pray for them, as David did, and to labour for their eternal welfare. up a child in the way he should go; and when he is old, he will not depart from it."g "Bring them up in the

ing them up in the way of life. Numerous instances can be produced of pious parents, who have had ungodly children, perhaps it would be difficult to produce one instance of the reverse, in which a parent, who has literally TRAINED up his child in the way he should go, has had to encounter this result.

Duties of children.

Indulge that honour and respect for their parents, which flow from filial love, which God approves, while disobedience incurs his most severe displeasure. "Honour thy father and mother, (which is the first commandment with promise,) that it may be well with thee, and thou mayest long on the earth."ⁱ "Cursed be he that setteth light by his father or his mother."^k "Whoso robbeth his father or his mother, and saith, It is no transgression; the same is the companion of a destroyer."^l

Hearken to the counsels of their parents, and obey their directions, excepting only in such cases as would be inconsistent in the sight of God. "Children, obey your parents in the Lord: for this is right."^m "Children, obey your parents in the Lord: for this is well-pleasing unto the Lord."ⁿ "You ought to obey God rather than men."^o

In age when their parents need assistance and support from them, cheerfully to render this, and thus to minister to their comfort, and requite their kindness. "If any widow children or nephews, let them learn first to show piety unto the Lord, and to requite their parents: for that is good and acceptable before God. If any man or woman that believe have widows, let them relieve them. But if any provide for his own, and especially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel."^p

Duties of husbands and wives.

On the part of the wife, submission and affection; on the part of the husband, tenderness, forbearance, and love, like that of the Lord Jesus to his church. "Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord. Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, gave himself for it. So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies: he that loveth his wife loveth himself.

ⁱ Eph. vi. 2, 3. ^k Deut. xxvii. 16. ^l Prov. xxviii. 24. see also Prov. xxx. 17. ^m Ezek. xxii. 7. ⁿ Prov. i. 8. ^o Eph. vi. 1. ^p Col. iii. 20. ^q Acts v. 29. ^r 1 Tim. v. 4, 16, 8.

not with eye-service, as men-pleasers; but as the se Christ, doing the will of God from the heart; with doing service, as to the Lord, and not to men." many servants as are under the yoke count their own worthy of all honour, that the name of God and his be not blasphemed. And they that have believing let them not despise them, because they are brethren rather do them service, because they are faithful and partakers of the benefit. These things teach and "Exhort servants to be obedient unto their own masters to please them well in all things; not answering again as purloining, but showing all good fidelity; that they adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things." servants, be subject to your masters with all fear; not only to the good and gentle, but also to the froward."

On the part of masters, kindness, moderation, and in recompensing services. "Thou shalt not oppress a hired servant that is poor and needy." "Woe to him that useth his neighbour's service without wages, as him not for his work." After servants are directed to be faithful, and to serve with good will, it is added, "Masters, do the same things unto them, forbearing wrath, knowing that your Master also is in heaven: neither

se which belong to the station that you occupy. Perhaps you are the child of parents still living, whose hearts are kept up in you and your welfare. Consider how many solemn motives, enforced by the most encouraging or awful actions, urge you to treat them with filial affection, kindness, obedience, and respect. If your heart is open to the expressions of gratitude, you will render this tribute to them, who have watched over you without wearying, who have labored for you without fainting, who have never thought they would do too much to promote your happiness, who tended you with unceasing care in infancy, and who have followed you with kind attentions even to the present hour.

If promises will encourage a devout attention to these important precepts, you are assured by an inspired apostle, that, honour thy father and thy mother, is the first commandment with promise. An able American writer observes, "In consulting with the plain people of this country, distinguished by their good sense, and careful observation of facts, I have found them, to a great extent, firmly persuaded of the verification of this promise in our own days; and ready to produce a variety of proofs from cases, in which they have seen the promise realized. Their opinion on this subject is mine; and with their experience my own has coincided. Indeed, no small measure of prosperity seems ordinarily *interwoven* with the course of filial piety. I do not believe, that miracles are sought for its reward. But I will say, that on the tide of providence multiplied blessings are borne into its possession, seasons when they are unexpected, in ways unforeseen, and means unprovided by its own forecast, which are often of high importance; which, altogether, constitute a rich proportion of prosperity; and which, usually, are not found by persons of the contrary character."*

If the spotless example of the Son of God, when he dwelt on earth, weighs with you, you have that example with all its power to enforce the exercise of filial piety. "This wonderful person, notwithstanding his great and glorious character, and sublime destination, was the fairest specimen of obedience to parents ever seen in the present world. Let children remember, that, *if they have not the spirit of Christ, they are none of his*. He was subject to his parents, as a child of

* Dwight.

child is, *Go thou, and do likewise.*"*

Addressing you as a disciple of the Saviour, it is presume that examples of an opposite description necessary; but perhaps some ungrateful, disobedient may read this page. Let him consider, that in numerous instances filial impiety has met with its just reward, even in this world. A few months ago a young man, not far from me, was unexpectedly killed by a blow from another. Visiting the village where he had lived, not long afterwards, I stated to me that he at times had struck his mother, and his guilty hand struck her that gave him being, and that a neighbour struck him into eternity.

§ 4. Are you a parent, a father or a mother? Consider much depends on your attention to your children's welfare. Consider the awful responsibility which is laid upon you. Speaking of this responsibility, an excellent author and missionary observes, "Every Christian parent is responsible for over his own household, 'a king and a priest unto his people.' How solemn the engagement to take the care of a family, a public minister! Yet the responsibility lying upon a parent is by no means so great, as that upon a public minister; not even so solemn as that which lies upon an individual in reference to his servants. Chi-

citude, is expended upon the body, and upon an existence which, like a vapour, appeareth for a moment, and then van-
 eth away. Perhaps you are not chargeable with a total
 indifference to their spiritual interests: you expect to see them
 at family worship; you take them with you to attend on the
 services of the Christian sabbath, and you set them a good
 example. It may be, that you admonish them occasionally
 on perceiving something wrong in their tempers. But would
 you excuse, in your minister, such a cold, such an official,
 discharge of duty as this, if you saw no anxiety in him to
 save the souls of his hearers, if he made no pathetic, no earnest
 appeals to the heart and to the conscience? If you would not
 excuse this in a man who is a comparative stranger to the
 greater part of those whom he addresses, can such an indiffer-
 ence to the spiritual, the eternal interests of his own offspring
 be excused in a parent?

“I was blessed with a mother who frequently took my sister
 and me aside to pray with us; and often have I heard her
 pray with such earnestness, mingling her tears with her peti-
 tions, and throwing so much of the feelings of the mother
 into her prayers, that, young as I was, it went to my very
 heart.

“I was lately informed, by a pious and able minister in
 Somersetshire, that on the evening when the first permanent
 religious impressions were made on his mind his pious mother
 was detained at home. But she spent the time devoted to
 public worship in secret prayer for the salvation of her son;
 and so fervent did she become in these intercessions, that, like
 our Lord in Gethsemane, she fell on her face, and remained
 in fervent supplications till the service had nearly closed.
 Her son, brought under the deepest impressions by the sermon
 of his father, went into a field after the service, and there
 prayed most fervently for himself. When he came home, the
 mother looked at her son with a manifest concern, anxious to
 discover whether her prayers had been heard, and whether
 her son had commenced the all-important inquiry, ‘What
 shall I do to be saved?’ In a few days the son acknowledged
 himself to be the subject of impressions of which none
 need be ashamed; impressions which lay the foundation
 of all excellence of character here, and of all blessedness
 hereafter.

"O ye Christian mothers! Have *you* thus in reference to your children, 'wrestled in birth again, till Christ be born in their hearts the hope of glory?' Have you taken them aside, and prayed with them and for them, one by one, till it is something most touching in such a scene, and to you of a child almost irresistible. It is a holy violence, to snatch a darling child from impending destruction, like the prayer mentioned by the apostle James, will unquestionably 'avail much.'"*

§ 5. If you are a parent, consider the happy effects which result from such pious care. Frequently active parental piety meets its speedy reward, in the early piety of the dear child for whom it prays, and over whom it watches. The seeds of piety sown in the hearts of our Baxters and Bridges and Wattses, and how speedy, how rich, was the harvest! In other instances instructions and prayers have appeared in vain. The seed has seemed buried in a frozen, barren soil; yet at length it has sprung up, and borne fruit a hundred-fold.†

* Ward's Sermons on the Design of the Death of Christ.

† Many pleasing facts might be adduced in illustration of this. One has been mentioned, another follows. A pious aged woman, who had a church under the care of a Mr. Irish, an American minister, had a son who she used every means in her power to train him up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord; he was the child of many prayers. The young man, but was of a gay dissipated turn; she still followed him with her faithful warnings of his awful situation as a sinner before God. One day he told her what his end would be, dying in that state. One day he

The happy and important effect of such instructions, even where conversion does not immediately follow, has been evident in a multitude of cases. Young persons who have received a pious education, cannot easily forget that eternal world which has been often set before them. However they may slight religion, death and judgment still alarm them. They know they are wrong, and that their parents are right. Conscience will not let them sin at ease. Its warnings mar their pleasure, and often check their career, or render them wretched when they expect delight. And perhaps years after those who prayed with, and taught them, are gone to the grave, they are led to the Saviour, whose love was unfolded to them in their early years.

§ 6. Where parents would promote the eternal welfare of their family, let them sedulously and devoutly attend to family worship. If a parent, not only pray for your children, not only occasionally in your closet pray with them, but daily in your family. Let your house be a house of prayer to the living God. Many excuses are offered for neglecting this duty; but the real cause of neglect is coldness and indifference to the things of God, and the eternal welfare of a family. At that be subdued, and other excuses will vanish like mists before the rising sun. Who at the judgment-bar will plead against family worship,* or offer one excuse for its neglect?

A striking testimony to the effect of family devotion and consistent piety, is recorded in the life of the late venerable minister of the gospel, Mr. Scott. His son observes, "To his constant and edifying observance of family worship, in conjunction with the steady consistent spirit and conduct, which, notwithstanding imperfections incident to human nature, they would not fail to remark in him, is, I am persuaded, very much to be traced, not only the blessing of God, which I trust has descended on his own family, but the further striking and important fact—that in very few instances has a servant, or a young person, or indeed any person, passed any length of time under his roof, without appearing to be brought perma-

rted into his mind: "Poor creature, you used to carry a saint, and now you carry a devil."—The issue was, he embraced religion, and his father's prayers were answered. Let no parent be discouraged from persevering in pious labours; but labour in hope, and pray in confidence.

* I once, to my surprise, met with some professors of religion that did so; but for this circumstance I should not have supposed that such persons had existed.—For further observations on family devotion, see Doddridge's *Advertisements*, published by the Religious Tract Society.

nently under the influence of religious principle. And was not much his practice to address himself closely and minutely, as some have done with very good effect, to persons individually. It was not so much by preaching directly to them, as *by living before them*, making a living use of incidents and occasions, and being so conversant, instructive, devout, and benevolent in family worship, under the blessing of God, he produced so striking an impression upon them."

Consider too, that in training up children in the piety, you may be diffusing good for ages to come. There are the instances in which God has so blessed these efforts that for age after age the stream of piety has continued to flow. One generation after another has caught the flame, has felt the sacred principle, and though religion was not in the blood, yet it has descended, like a fair inheritance from parent to child, through a long succession of generations. One instance of this kind, out of myriads, occurs in the life of the celebrated John Wesley. His mother was a pious woman, the daughter of an eminent nonconformist minister. He was descended from a religious mother, who took the care of his education, that he was under serious impressions so early, that he declared he knew not the time when he was converted. In this instance we see religion flowing through four generations, and had we information to go farther back, might probably trace it for many more. On the other hand, a parent who neglects training up his children in the way of life, may be a principal means of bringing ignorance and wretchedness, guilt and damnation, on his descendants for generations to come.

§ 7. Though the remarks here made have a peculiar reference to the effect of parental example and instruction, let them not be confined to that only. The influence of playing piety at home is felt, and may be great, whatever the situation which the disciple of Jesus fills. When a member of an irreligious family has been converted, when a member has adorned the gospel, has united piety, prayer, and prayer, it has often led to the conversion of many. Some years ago I knew a youth awakened to the importance of religion, and deeply impressed with his own conduct. He began to inquire for the path of peace; others of

mily imitated his example. He joined the Christian church; two brothers older than himself, and two other relatives, connected with them by marriage, soon followed him. He has finished his course in hope, and his friends, it is trusted, are now walking in the way of peace.

The child may win the parent.* I know a young disciple of the Saviour, who, when she set out in religion, had parents who were both of them strangers to the gospel of salvation. But to see her child embrace religion while she knew it not, impressed the mother's heart, and under God was a means of leading her to inquire for the grace of life. She soon became a member of the church to which her daughter had been previously united.

The wife may win the husband; the husband the wife. Were it necessary, cases of this description might be mentioned, for they are many. In the same way a pious master may produce incalculable good among those he employs. If he considers himself, as he should do, lying under a solemn responsibility with respect to his servants, and if he labour and pray for their conversion, his servants may have reason to eternity to bless the hour which brought them under his pious care.

Even the servant may win the employer. The effect of piety in persons in humble life may be great on those in cir-

* The child may win the parent. The following proof of this occurred not long since in the United States of America. "Two daughters of an irreligious father, while away from home, embraced religion. The father alarmed, immediately sent for them home; but before the messenger reached them, they had made their lasting choice, and found the peace the world cannot give. They returned to their father's—not overwhelmed (as he expected) with gloom and despondency; but with countenances beaming with a heavenly serenity and celestial hope.

"They told their father what the Lord had done for their souls—that they were pilgrims here—they kept in view the bright fields of promise as they traversed this desert of sin, and were looking for that city which hath foundations.

"Soon after their return home they were anxious to establish family worship. They affectionately requested their father to commence that duty. He replied, that he saw no use in it. He had lived very well more than fifty years without prayer, and he could not be burthened with it now. They then asked permission to pray with the family themselves. Not thinking they would have confidence to do it, he assented to the proposition.

"The duties of the day being ended, and the hour for retiring to rest having arrived, the sisters drew forward the stand, placed on it the Bible—one read a chapter—they both kneeled—the other engaged in prayer. The father stood—and while the humble fervent prayer of his daughter was ascending on devotion's wing to heaven, his knees began to tremble, his nerves, which had been gathering strength for half a century, could no longer support him—he also kneeled, and then became prostrate on the floor. God heard their prayer, and directed their father's weeping eyes (which had never shed tears of penitence before) to the Lamb of God which taketh away the sins of the world."

cumstances far above theirs. A pleasing instance of this kind has already been mentioned in chapter vii. § 6. note.

Where the piety of servants has no other effect, yet it will recommend them to the esteem and confidence of discerning employers. It is true, such is the hatred of vital religion to some persons, that religion in their servants is the object of contempt and opposition; but many others know how to discern and value a servant rendered faithful by religion.*

§ 8. Besides all that has been urged, there are many other considerations, which should impress on your heart the importance of showing piety in your own home. If you would not be stained with the hateful crime of hypocrisy, you must act this part. For surely no hypocrisy is more hateful, and none more mischievous, than theirs, who abroad seem pious but at home manifest little or nothing of the influence of religion.

If you would not eternally undo your nearest friends and dearest relatives, you must show piety at home. Are you the child of parents who are strangers to religion? and do you profess it? they will form their idea of religion from you. If they see you gentle and humble, affectionate and kind, patient of injury, and prompt to good, and shining in all the graces of the gospel, it will recommend religion to them; and perhaps lead them to the Saviour and to heaven. But if they

you proud, passionate, quarrelsome, unkind, and disobedient

to honour it not by their conduct, they contribute in a sadful degree to harden their own children or nearest relatives against the truth. Few are so hardened, as well as so careless, as the children of those professors of religion that display not piety at home. It is far better to be the child of a profligate, than the child of an inconsistent professor of the gospel. The child of a profligate, however nursed up in vice, not hardened against the gospel, by seeing his parents profess it with their lips, but disregard it in their life; and thus, by being continually taught at home, to believe all religion hypocrisy. Hence there is more hope of the conversion of a profligate's child, than of the child of unholy professors of the gospel.

The effects of professing religion without displaying piety at home, are thus awful and dreadful in the extreme. Some years ago an aged minister mentioned to me a painful fact. In his early life he spent some years under the roof of a person who was a popular preacher of the gospel, and who was the instrument of awakening many from a state of carelessness and sin. But while thus successful abroad in turning many to righteousness, at home he displayed little of the influence of religion. Family prayer was seldom or never practised in his house. He gave way to harsh and violent tempers. He had six children; but alas! there was not reason to believe, at even one of them became a follower of the Saviour. They went on, driven as it were to perdition by their father's unholy conduct. On one occasion, when the writer had preached in a populous village, on displaying religion in the family, a respectable friend afterwards spoke of the importance of the subject, and uttered a sentiment to the following effect: That he could forfeit his life if he did not prove that the worst families, and the worst individuals, in the parish, were the children of persons that had professed religion. The writer mentioned this sentiment to a minister in another populous village in Derbyshire, and he asserted that in that village the same observation would hold good. Thus it is that persons, who profess religion, but do not honour it, in their own families, entail on their friends or their children hardness of heart, and profligacy or infidelity in this world, and eternal enmity to God and endless damnation in the world which is to come.

MOTIVES FOR PROMOTING

How will relatives meet the relatives their unholy conduct ruined! how will unholy parents meet their injured at the tremendous bar of final judgment! A pious observer, "Who has so much to dread in the prospects of the Judge, may say, 'Lord! this father, this mother of mine, never warned me of this day; or warned me of little solicitude, that I thought the danger could not wait. Hence I followed the multitude to do evil, and acted my everlasting interests till I find it now proves too late. But ah, Lord! are there no mitigating circumstances—

my case? If I had been faithfully warned and entreated in an anxiety similar to what was felt when my body was in danger, had been manifested towards my soul, surely I should not have been in these circumstances. O Lord! it is, in a great measure, chargeable upon my father, upon my mother, who conversed with me upon every subject except my soul, that I am now doomed to hear the sentence, Depart, thou cursed.'"

Every motive that affection can urge, should lead you to labour and pray to promote the best interests of those with whom you are connected in the strongest ties of nature. Else, if you enjoy religion and they are strangers to it, how soon a day of dreadful and eternal separation will arrive! Ah, in that day friends, united here in nature's strongest, dearest ties, but not united in the ties of grace, must part asunder to meet no more for ever. Families that once met around the same hearth, sat around the same table, and passed the best and happiest years of life beneath the same roof, must separate to an infinite and eternal distance. One part rising high in glory in the blissful climes of heaven, the other sunk deep in eternal despair in the pit of fire and woe. The parents in heaven, and their once beloved children in hell; or, perhaps, the children welcomed by the Judge of all to life and bliss, and their unholy, unhappy parents doomed to all the horrors of eternal night. Brothers and sisters, husbands and wives, here much and mutually beloved, when they leave this world must frequently separate for ever. One crowned with glory will join the family of the first-born, the other sink beneath a load of unforgiven sin to misery and despair. They

who once were united in such fond attachment, now united no more. They part, and part for ever. They pursued their journey in union through the little span of time, but now, while some exult in all the light, and love, and joy of life eternal, their once beloved associates, swept into the gulf of perdition, feel nothing but guilt, remorse, despair, and wretchedness; and anticipate not one bright moment in the dreary ages of an eternal night. O, my friend, can you bear the thought of such a separation between yourself and those you hold most dear? Do you not tremble at the idea of so dismal a parting from the child you tenderly love? or the dear parent you revere? or the brothers or sisters, who have been the affectionate companions of your youthful hours? or the husband, or the wife, that is now the fond soother of your care? Yet, if you are devoted to Jesus, and they are not, it must come. How should the dreadful idea add fervour to your prayers, and life to your endeavours, to snatch them as brands from the burning! But perhaps they are consecrated to the Saviour, and you are not. O can you bear to be the wretched outcast? to see your child, or your parent, your brother, or your sister, your husband, or your wife, ascend to heaven, while you, with a broken heart, look after them in vain? to see them rise to glory and eternal life, while you sink to darkness, misery, and despair? If the thought is dreadful, what will be the reality? Flee from the dreadful heart-breaking woe, and make their God and Father yours.*

* Perhaps a brief but impressive narrative may add force to these remarks. "I have known," said a pious father, "the grace of God for nearly thirty years;" but in spite of all my advice, my five sons and two daughters, all grown up, ran on in the broad way to destruction. This cost me many a prayer and tear; yet I saw no fruit of all my labours. In January last, I dreamed that the day of judgment was come. I saw the Judge on his great white throne, the holy angels sitting around him, and all nations gathered before him. I and my wife were on the right hand, but I could not see my children.

"I then thought that I must go and seek them; so I went to the left hand, and found them all standing together; tearing their hair, beating their breasts, and cursing the day that they were born. As soon as they saw me, they all caught hold of me, and said, 'O father! we will part no more!'—I said, 'My dear children, I am come to try, if possible, to get you out of this dismal situation.' So I took them all with me; but when we were come within a bowshot of the Judge, I thought he cast an angry look, and said, 'What do thy children with thee now?—they would not take thy warning when upon earth: they shall not share the crown with thee. Depart, ye cursed!' At these words, I awoke, bathed in sweat and tears. A few days after this, as we were sitting altogether on a sabbath evening, I related my dream to them: no sooner did I begin, but first one, then another, yea, all of them, burst into tears; and God fastened conviction on their hearts. Five of them are now rejoicing in God their Saviour. I believe God is at work with the other two; so that I doubt not that he will give them also to my prayers.

§ 10. How happy is that family where all, united in Saviour's love, are travelling together to eternal life! prayers, what labours of love will not such a prospect inspire! It is true, death will tear that family asunder one by one, till all the once happy circle are away; yet they are cheered with the bright prospect of a family again, where adieus and farewells are unknown. How sweet is their united devotion, when

"Kneeling down to heaven's eternal King,
 "The saint, the father, and the husband prays,
 "Hope springs exulting on triumphant wing,
 "That thus they all shall meet in future days.
 "There ever bask in uncreated rays;
 "No more to sigh or shed the bitter tear,
 "For ever singing their Redeemer's praise,
 "In such society, but still more dear,
 "While circling time moves round in one eternal sphere.

How sweet will be their future union! O blessed day when they who associated below, shall meet in realms above! Blessed day, when they who mingled sorrows here, shall mingle raptures there! when they who shared the trials of earth, shall share in sweeter union the triumphs of heaven! For ever safe! for ever and for ever blest! No longer soothed by the woe of others, but partakers of each other's felicity! No longer tempted by temptation, afflicted by calamity, stained by sin, alarmed by imperfection, alarmed by danger, never more to be separated from their privilege, as happiness is their portion. The storms of time cannot follow them, sheltered safe from every storm. The blasts of affliction shall beat no more on their now peaceful home. The inroads of disease shall no longer alarm, nor the assaults of death break their eternal union. Time for these things will be no longer. These began in the field of mortal existence; but the peaceful mountains of the blest are for ever sheltered from them. Happy trials which nothing through eternal ages can disturb! labours which nothing can dissolve! delightful securities which nothing through eternity shall ever alarm! and happy union, which shall continue unbroken, while the iron rods of an eternal day are rolling for ever along! Joyfully! with what melody will they join the everlast-
 "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain, to receive praise

—This good old saint, before he exchanged time for eternity, had the happiness of seeing the remainder of his children converted to the truth of Jesus, and adorning the doctrine of God our Saviour, by useful

riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing. Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, be unto HIM that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the LAMB, for ever and ever !”

O, my friend, with such inducements, who that feels the Saviour’s love, and true affection for his beloved connexions, would not wish to show piety at home !

CHAPTER XIII.

ON THE SABBATH, AND ITS IMPROVEMENT.

§ 1. **O**F all the institutions designed by heavenly mercy to promote the temporal and eternal welfare of mankind, there is no one of such immense importance, and productive of such immense benefits, as the sabbath. “Wherever the sabbath is not, there is no worship, no religion. Man forgets God, and God forsakes man.” Where the sabbath is not regarded, man degenerates to a brute, a heathen, an infidel, or an atheist ; and hastens, with a rapid step, to the scene where he will bear all the character, and all the features, of a fiend. Where the sabbath is loved, venerated, and improved, peace smiles, hope blooms, piety matures and ripens, and the soul hastens onward to the period, when the sabbaths of time shall be exchanged for the long sabbath of eternity.

§ 2. God, at the beginning of time, appointed a sabbath. This solemn season for rest and religion he ordained should then be the seventh day. “God blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it ; because that in it he had rested from all his work which God created and made.”* There is reason to believe that this day was regarded as sacred by the patriarchs, and it is decisively clear, that it was esteemed holy be-

(*) Gen. ii. 3.

fore the time when the law was given at Sinai. For some time before that period, Moses is described as speaking to the Israelites respecting it, and speaking of it not as if it were a new institution, but one well known to them. "He said unto them, This is that which the Lord hath said, To-morrow is the rest of the holy sabbath unto the Lord."^b

When the Lord, with appalling and terrible majesty, gave the law from Mount Sinai, the observation of the sabbath was the subject of one of the ten precepts that he delivered on that tremendous occasion. "Remember the sabbath day to keep it holy. Six days shalt thou labour, and do all thy work: but the seventh day is the sabbath of the Lord thy God: in it thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy man-servant, nor thy maid-servant, nor thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates: for in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day: wherefore the Lord blessed the sabbath day, and hallowed it."^c

This solemn law of the Most High does not appear to have been introduced at this time as a new law, but as a law referring to a subject, with which the Israelites were well acquainted. REMEMBER the sabbath day. This phraseology implies, that they were acquainted with the day and with the law which they were now solemnly commanded to regard.

§ 3. With respect to the change of the sabbath from the seventh day of the week to the first, it may be observed, that

The Lord Jesus Christ was Lord of the sabbath, and consequently possessed authority to alter the day on which the sabbath is to be observed. "The Son of man is Lord even of the sabbath day."^d

That the Lord Jesus Christ communicated to his apostles so large a measure of his Spirit, and such authority in settling his church, that a change of the sabbath from the seventh day to the first, appointed by them, would be as binding on his disciples, as such a change expressly spoken of by himself. "Verily, I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven; and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven."^e "I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now.

(b) *Exod. xvi. 23, 26.*

(c) *Exod. xx. 8-11.*
(e) *Matt. xviii. 18.*

(d) *Matt. xii. 8.*

Howbeit, when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth."f Thus favoured, the apostles asserted their divine commission. "Let a man so account of us as of the ministers of Christ, and stewards of the mysteries of God."g

That the Scriptures lead us to believe that the Lord Jesus Christ, or his divinely inspired apostles, did make such alteration. The first day of the week was the day on which the Lord Jesus, after his resurrection, repeatedly appeared to his disciples.^h

The first day of the week was the day on which the gospel was first preached, with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven, and on which several thousands were converted, and a wide foundation laid for the Christian church. "And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance."ⁱ And the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls. This fact is peculiarly remarkable. If the Most High had designed the seventh day to be continued as the day for public worship, can it with any reason be supposed, that the abundant effusion of the Holy Spirit, which qualified the apostles to preach for the FIRST time what is *strictly* the gospel, should have been made on the first day? and that the first day of the week should have been the day honoured by the first preaching of the gospel, and by the conversion of thousands? Did not this procedure of the Lord God mark out the first day of the week, as the day on which he designed the gospel of Jesus to be most extensively and successfully preached?

The first day of the week was the day on which the disciples united in that most solemn act of worship, the supper of the Lord. "And we sailed away from Philippi after the days of unleavened bread, and came unto them to Troas in five days; where we abode seven days. And upon the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul preached unto them, ready to depart on the morrow, and continued his speech until midnight."^k The argument for the first day being the Lord's day, which is furnished in this verse, is peculiarly forcible, in consequence of its being

(f) John xvi. 12-14.
(h) John xx. 19, 26.

(g) 1 Cor. iv. 1, 2.
(i) Acts ii. 1, 4.

(k) 2 Pet. iii. 2.
(l) Acts xx. 6, 7.

expressly stated that the apostle and his companions abode *seven* days, or one week, at Troas. If the seventh day of the week, in which the apostle arrived at Troas, had been the day devoted to public worship, he was there to engage in its sacred exercises; but instead of the account stating that any thing of this kind took place on that day, it passes that day over in silence, and records, that on the first day of the following week the disciples met for that solemn act of worship, the Lord's supper, and that *then* the apostle preached unto them.

The first day of the week was the day on which the disciples were directed to make their charitable contributions for their suffering friends.¹

There cannot be a reasonable doubt that the first day is the day distinguished by the appellation of the Lord's day, by the apostle John in the Revelations. "I was in the spirit on the Lord's day."^m The name applied to the day expresses its peculiar design. It is the Lord's day. Other days are allotted to man for attention to the needful concerns of this transitory world; but this day is peculiarly the Lord's, a day to be devoted to his worship and glory. It may be said, indeed, that all days are his. They are in one sense; but so is all creation. The cattle on a thousand hills are his; yet the Jewish husbandman was allowed to esteem his cattle his own; but if a part of his herd were presented as a sacrifice to God, that part, though in one sense the Lord's before, was now esteemed as set apart in a peculiar way for God. So with the Christian every day should be the Lord's; but while he claims one day as more peculiarly his own, it suggests that that day is to be set apart from common for sacred purposes, as the beast presented for sacrifice was no longer its former owner's, but the Lord's.

Though to look to ancient Christian writers, for arguments in support of institutions which the Scriptures do not mention, is to dishonour the word of God, and to open a wide door to superstition; yet it is not unpleasant to trace in the writings of the very early Christians, further accounts of institutions which the Scriptures do record. Justin Martyr, who wrote his Apology at hardly the distance of fifty years from the time of the apostle John, observes, "And in every eucharis-

(1) 1 Cor. xvi. 2

(m) Rev. i. 10.

sacrifice we bless the Maker of all things, through his Jesus Christ, and through the Holy Spirit; and upon the called Sunday,* all that live either in city or country together at the same place, where the writings of the scriptures and prophets are read, as much as time will give; when the reader has done, the bishop makes a sermon, wherein he instructs the people, and animates them to the practice of such lovely precepts; at the conclusion of this discourse, we all rise up together and pray: and prayers being said, as I now said, there is bread, and wine, and water blessed, and the bishop, as before, sends up prayers, and thanksgivings, with all the fervency he is able, and the people conclude all with the joyful acclamation of Amen: then the consecrated elements are distributed to, and partaken of, by those that are present, and sent to the absent by the hands of deacons.

But the wealthy and the willing, for every one is at liberty, contribute as they think fitting; and this collection is presented with the bishop, and out of this he relieves the orphan and the widow, and such as are reduced to want by sickness or any other cause, and such as are in bonds, and ransoms that come from far; and in a word, he is the guardian and almoner to all the indigent.

Upon Sunday we all assemble, that being the first day which God set himself to work upon the dark void, in order to make the world, and in which Jesus Christ our Saviour rose again from the dead; for the day before Saturday was crucified, and the day after, which is Sunday, he appeared to his apostles and disciples, and taught them what I am now proposing to your consideration."

4. With respect to the way of observing the sabbath, observe it is to be set apart for God. It is the Lord's day, yours. The *day* is the Lord's, not merely the morning, the afternoon, or the evening, but the day. The command is not, Remember the sabbath morning to keep it holy, the sabbath afternoon: but the sabbath day. And so we

In the name Sunday the translator of Justin observes, "It was called so by Justin and Tertullian, because it happened upon that day of the week which by the heathens was dedicated to the sun, and therefore as being unknown to them by that name, the fathers commonly made use of it in their writings to the heathen emperors; but the more proper and prevailing name *Κυριακή*, or the Lord's day, as it is called by St. John himself, Rev. i. 10." *Justin's Apol.* vol. i. p. 115, 118.


are informed of the early Christians, that they spent a part of the day together engaged in those solemn exercises which were ripening them for a sabbath above. This should be begun with God, be carried on with God, and ended with God. Private prayer, family devotion, examination, and meditation; reading the Scriptures, visiting the sick, public worship, and the religious instruction of the young, and, if a parent, of your own children, are the elements that should occupy the sabbath. If at the head of your family, you are commanded by God to let your servants and your cattle rest; and if you are employing these, you as profane the sabbath as if employed yourself.

The ways in which this sacred day is profaned are numberless. Some profane it by buying, selling, travelling, and amusements. To such the words apply,

“What evil thing is this ye do,
“Who God’s peculiar day profane,
“Your calling’s common works pursue,
“Your journeys, sports, and pleasures vain?
“Ye buy—the curse of God—ye sell—
“Your souls to sin, the world, and hell.”

The sabbath is profaned in numberless instances by attending to household business, that should be done on Saturday or left till Monday.

The sabbath is profaned by bakers busy at their ovens, farmers employing their servants in work not absolutely essential to the well-being of their cattle.



the state of the nation ? with tittle-tattling about the families ? with the state of trade ? with fashions, with arts ? Are these subjects for such a day, and for creation to have a heaven to gain, a hell to escape, a God to adore, an eternity before them, and but a few sabbaths to enjoy ? Yet what more common ! What else do many professors of religion on the Lord's day converse about ? Many of the gospel scarcely leave the house of prayer, before begin discoursing on these or other mere worldly subjects. A short and expressive account of the mode in which the sabbath should be spent, is furnished in the fifty-eighth chapter of Isaiah ;—and an important promise connected with it : “ Thou turn away thy foot from the sabbath, from doing violence on my holy day ; and call the sabbath a delight, the glory of the Lord, honourable ; and shalt honour him, not thine own ways, nor finding thine own pleasure, nor going by thine own words : then shalt thou delight thyself in the Lord ; and I will cause thee to ride upon the high places of the earth, and feed thee with the heritage of Jacob thy father : for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it.”^a Nothing of a ceremonial nature appears in this description, and the latter part of the passage contained a promise more immediately applicable to Israel, yet the promise, “ Then shalt thou delight thyself in the Lord,” is so naturally connected with the solemn improvement of the Lord's day, that it justly be viewed as made to all who pursue the practice previously required.

Now allow me affectionately to urge upon you a diligent and strict improvement of this holy day. All that is dear to us as an immortal being, all that you are anxious to preserve, indeed a Christian, enforce such observance. “ To the constitution we owe far the greater part of the spiritual blessings which we enjoy ; and, in a high sense, we owe our souls. But for this day, we should neither have sought, nor secured, eternal life : for where no sabbath is, there is no God. But for this day, earthly things would have engrossed all our thoughts. But for this day, the world, as a system, would rust, corrupt, and consume all the disposition to duty, and all the hopes of heaven. The soul would be perished. Religion would die. God would be forgotten.

(^a) Isa. lviii. 13, 14.

The death of Christ would be vain. Mankind would cease to be saved : and heaven would fail of her destined inhabitants. How desolate the prospect ! How strongly would this world resemble the regions of final despair ! where no sabbath dawns ; where no prayers nor praises ascend ; no sermon proclaim pardon and peace to sinners ; the voice of mercy never sounds ; and the smiles of forgiving, redeeming, and sanctifying love never illumine the dreary valley of the shadow of death !”*

§ 6. A strictly religious improvement of the sabbath will be fraught with incalculable blessings to yourself. It will counteract the influence of the world ; it will strengthen every grace ; it will nourish the flame of holy love, and mature your soul for all the enjoyments of the heavenly world. Judge Hale observes, “ I have found by a strict and diligent observation, that the due observing the duties of this day hath ever had joined to it a blessing upon the rest of my time, and the week that hath been so begun, hath been blessed and prosperous to me. And on the other hand, when I have been negligent of the duties of this day, the rest of the week hath been unsuccessful and unhappy to my secular employments. So that I could easily make an estimate of my successes, in my own secular employments, the week following, by the manner of passing this day : and this I do not write lightly or inconsiderately, but upon a long and sound observation and experience.”

§ 7. To strengthen and deepen your impressions of the immense importance of the strict observance of the Lord’s day look at what passes around you, think of your obligations to God, and contemplate the scenes before you.

Look at what passes around you. Some will tell you that a strict observance of the sabbath is superstitious ; but observe their character. Can you point to *one* of this description that displays any eminence in piety ? Do their affections seem heavenly ? their hopes bright ? their souls devout ? Are they the zealous and devout followers of the Lord ? Rather, are they not those, whose profession of religion is a cold, barren, heartless, worthless thing ? Are these they with whom you would wish to die ? and when they quit this transient world *would you wish your soul in their soul’s place ?*

* Dwight.

Look at others, whose piety is elevated, whose zeal is warm, whose faith is strong, whose hopes are bright, who live as angels here, and as travellers to glory, and whose souls are entering apace for heaven; to whom religion is their meat and drink, their pleasure and their all:—these are they that reverence the Lord's day, and strictly improve its holy hours. Could you not wish to die their death? and to have your soul gathered with theirs? Then imitate their example. The life of the Lord Jesus, By their fruits ye shall know them, may be applied here. Eminent piety is uniformly connected with the devout and strict observation of the Lord's day; and the want of a strict improvement of the holy day is, even where a profession of religion is made, as uniformly connected with lukewarmness or hypocrisy.

Think of your obligations to God. Does he, who gives you every day, and from whom you hope for immortality, require so much, when he bids you consecrate to him one day in seven? Had he condescended to ask you what portion of your time you would solemnly set apart for his peculiar service, would you have thought of less? could you have thought of *so little*? Part of the sabbath is employed in receiving needed support, and were a person from fourteen years of age to sixty, to spend ten hours every sabbath in employments of a strictly religious nature, in a life of sixty years, the time thus employed would by no means amount to three whole years; and is this much, in such a life, to consecrate to such a Friend? Besides, while the Lord thus claims the day, he intends the profit of the day for you.

Think of what is before you—a dying day and an eternal world. And when you come to quit this transitory world, will you then repent of having improved the Lord's day with the most strict devotion? Will you then wish to have trifled away in idle conversation, or vain amusement, or worldly science, its sacred hours? Rather, would not the recollection of sabbaths thus passed, fill the hour of death with alarm, and gild with thorns your dying pillow? What way of spending the Lord's day will yield you most pleasure in death and eternity? Only spend it in that way. Spend it as you will wish in your last hours to have done. Spend it as a traveller hastening to eternity. Remember that every sabbath which ~~passes~~, leaves you one less to improve, and one more to ac-

able move for a strict observance of the Lord's day. This may have the happiest effects in promoting religion. I have heard a respectable minister of the gospel relate a fact illustrative of this observation. A solicitor, with a law-suit in hand, which was expected to come to trial on Monday morning. Several signatures were necessary to the papers, which were to be obtained previously to the Lord's day before the expected day of trial, he applied to a lady, a member of a dissenting church, for her signature. She refused to give it on the sabbath, but was willing to give the requisite deed the next morning. In vain he tried to move her from her resolution. All his influence was immovable. He then applied to two other persons, members of a dissenting church in London, but with similar reception: they were willing to sign as requested in the morning, but would not sign on the sabbath day. The effect of this consistent conduct on the mind of the solicitor was very pleasing. He discerned the effect of religion—its influence on reflection—he perceived his own want of religion, and the need of an all-wise and all-powerful God in the Christian's life. He issued in his conversion. He became a firm believer in the gospel; was the principal, if not the sole, instrument in erecting a house of prayer in his own neighbourhood; afterwards was a principal supporter of the interests of the cause. Such is one out of many instances of the happy

It will make the day a weariness. Besides, where is it commanded? Going to church or to chapel once in the day is very well, but as for any thing more, it is burthensome, and I am altogether indisposed to it.

Ans. My fellow-traveller to eternity, it is commanded when God says, Remember the sabbath DAY to keep it holy. He claims all the day as much as any part of it. To profane the morning or the evening, is as much rebellion against God as to profane the whole, and unless you religiously improve the day, you have no share in the blessings promised to those who improve not the morning or the afternoon, but who remember the sabbath day to keep it holy. As to making too much of this sacred day, do they who are in heaven think that this can be done? do they who are lost in hell? or will you when death and eternity are near? You do not complain that six days are too long for serving the world; you are contented all the week without the house of God, but not one day without the world. Which then has your heart? not God, but the world. If you are not awfully blind to your own state, you must perceive this; and while you are a lover of the world, the love of God is not in you. If one sabbath is a burthen to you, what would an eternal sabbath be? If you cannot be content for a few hours without the world, what happiness would you find even in heaven, where all is spiritual and devout? That you are indisposed for religious exercises, is both your sin and your misery, and confirms the importance of a change in you, great as a second birth. They that are after the flesh, the Lord declares, do mind the things of the flesh; and this is your case. While it is so you are a perishing sinner, and never can be happy, unless you become a new creature in Jesus Christ.

Obj. 2. I cannot benefit by the minister where I attend.

Ans. Is that your fault or his? If his, go where you can. If yours, the objection only makes matters worse. Perhaps you go without previous prayer, and without any real desire of spiritual good.

Obj. 3. I have no time but the Lord's day to instruct my children in religion.

Ans. Instruct them then in the intervals of public worship, but forget not to give them the important instruction of example, by letting them see that you love and improve the house of God.

Obj. 4. I am poor, and need recreation, and have no day but Sunday for it.


Ans. If pious as well as poor, you will love the house of God, and find true pleasure there, and if you are not pious you will be poor for both worlds, poor on earth, and poor still in hell; and while you are in danger of this, have you much cause for amusement? Have you not something more important than vain amusement to mind? to flee from the wrath to come? to get your sins forgiven, and your heart renewed? And while you do not think it too much to spend six days in every week to obtain support for your dying body, should you think one too much to spend in pursuing everlasting blessings for your immortal soul?

Obj. 5. I observe the day more strictly than many of my neighbours; I go occasionally to worship, but they go never.

Ans. They are going to perdition, and if you should meet these ungodly neighbours in hell, will this be sufficient to comfort you when your soul, by sabbath-breaking and sin, is sunk there?

Obj. 6. I should cheerfully attend divine worship, but the care of my family prevents me.

Ans. This excuse may be true, and sufficient at times; but at other times it will not avail. Frequently where there is a will there is a way. If you could get a pound by going to the house of God, would your family hinder you?



ord that men shall speak they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment.

Obj. 9. Who can do with such strictness?

Ans. Who has any certainty of getting to heaven without? The Lord Jesus says, Strive, agonize, to enter in at the narrow gate; for many will seek to enter in and shall not be able.

§ 10. Many persons neglect the public duties of the Lord's house, under the pretence that they read the Scriptures or other good books at home; but this is only one of those pitiful delusions by which multitudes delude themselves into eternal ruin. On this subject God has given a plain and express command: "Let us consider one another, to provoke unto love, and to good works: not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching." The services of God's house are by no means designed merely to communicate instruction, with which we were before acquainted. This, it is true, especially with respect to those who are unacquainted with the gospel, is of unspeakable moment; but with respect to the disciples of Christ, their principal design is to give opportunities for social devotion, and to strengthen and revive every religious disposition and feeling. When the blessed Jesus tabernacled below, he united in public worship, and saints and angels in heaven are described as joining in the most solemn acts of united devotion. Hence you may see the folly of the excuse for neglecting the house of God,—I do not go because I can get as much instruction by reading at home. The object of public worship is not merely to gain instruction. Did the Lord Jesus Christ need instruction? Do angels in heaven need it? Yet he on earth united in the public worship of God, and they do so in glory. To forsake God's house is rebellion against God's command, not forsaking the assembling of yourselves together. It is a rejection of the blessings. It manifests disbelief or contempt of Christ's promise, Where two or three are gathered in my name, there am I in the midst of them. Do you believe him thus present with his assembled disciples? and will you neglect to be present with them? Christians assemble for prayer, for praise, to hear the word of life, and to commemorate

(c) Heb. x. 24, 25.

leads to total apostasy. Then what a long and of evils follow : hopes disappointed, vows broken wrecked, expectations blasted, heaven lost, and ruined.

Improve your sabbaths. Forsake not regular with the children of God ; but keep in sight the day approaches, the day when all excuses for neglect frivolous indeed ; when all the guilt of broken sabbath be answered for, and all the mischiefs felt : the all these means shall end ; when broken sabbath late be lamented. But if your sabbaths are loved, proved, the day, when the worship of earth shall be changed for the worship of heaven, the praises those of eternity, and when, instead of the sabbath so soon gone for ever, a day of blessedness shall never more shall end.

CHAPTER XIV.

ould be your chief and most beloved companion. It is to be the disciples of Jesus a light for their feet, a lamp for their paths.

To search the Scriptures is an express Christian duty.

"Let the word of Christ dwell in you **RICHLY**, with all wisdom." "Search the Scriptures." You are commanded not merely to *read* the Scriptures, but to read them with such attention that your mind may be amply stored with their divine instructions. The precept, "Search the Scriptures," is peculiarly emphatic, it signifies to search them as a miner searches a mine for jewels or for gold; thus dig into the sacred mine, and search for the precious treasures it contains.

With respect to the doctrines and duties of religion, make the word of God your sole guide, and reject all human traditions.

The Lord Jesus taught his disciples how to treat human traditions on religious subjects, when he condemned a regard to those of the elders.^c "To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them."^d The doctrines of the Bible are the doctrines you are to believe. The duties enjoined in the Bible are the duties you are to practise; and all the additions which the traditions of men or human authority make, are not worth a rush; and often become the occasions of sin, when men reject the commandment of God to keep their own tradition.

As the word of God is thus in religion to be your sole guide, so you are required to add nothing to it, and from it to take nothing. "Ye shall not add unto the word which I command you, neither shall ye diminish ought from it, that ye may keep the commandments of the Lord your God which I command you."^e "Every word of God is pure: he is a shield unto them that put their trust in him. Add thou not unto his words, lest he reprove thee, and thou be found a liar."^f

§ 2. To ~~read~~ the Scriptures profitably, read them with a docile and humble mind, and with a desire to receive spiritual instruction from them. "As new-born babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby."^g "For

(a) Col. iii. 16.

(b) John v. 39.

(c) Mark vii. 5-9.

(d) Isa. viii. 20.

(e) Deut. iv. 2; xii. 32.

(f) Prov. xxx. 5, 6.

(g) 1 Pet. ii. 2.

gospel unto you than that which we have preached
let him be accursed."^j

To read the Scriptures profitably, always read
prayer for divine instruction. "They shall all be
God."^k "If any of you lack wisdom, let him as
that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth r
shall be given him."^l

§ 3. Many are the inducements presented in the
for such devout attention to their sacred contents.
in truth "the word of God ;"^m the word of Jeho
oracles of God ;ⁿ "the word of Christ."^o The
vealed are spoken by God, "who hath spoken to
Son."^p "For all Scripture is given by inspiratio
and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for
for instruction in righteousness ; that the man of G
perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.
holy Scriptures are able to make thee wise unto
through faith, which is in Christ Jesus."^r They
word of God's grace, which is able to build you
give you an inheritance among all them which
fied."^s "Heaven and earth shall pass away," b
"words shall not pass away."^t "These are writte
might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of

cepts I get understanding : therefore I hate every false way."w
 "The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul : the testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple : the statutes of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart. More to be desired are they than gold, yea, than much fine gold ; sweeter also than honey, and the honeycomb."x *They who improve this sacred book, shall enjoy in a peculiar degree their Creator's favour.* "Thus saith the Lord, The heaven is my throne, and the earth is my footstool ; but to this man will I look, to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit, and that trembleth at my word."y

§ 4. As you desire happiness, let the word of God be your ever dear delight. You cannot prize that blessed book sufficiently. Had it been brought you from heaven, in an angel's hand, it could not have been a more precious prize, or a surer guide to immortality. Suppose that but one in the world had been blessed with this treasure, that salvation had been offered to but one, and that this divine book had been sent to that one, to guide him in his way to heaven, how would the rest of mankind have envied that one ! Happy person to possess the promise of eternal life beyond the dark shades of death ! and to see heavenly day dawning beyond the gloom of the grave ! O had but one possessed this treasure, how would all besides have desired his lot ! how would they have wished that the path to heaven were open to them also ! How would multitudes have longed to enjoy, with the possessor of this single Bible, the sweet hope of immortality ; and could that one have sold his treasure, how eagerly might all the monarchs of the earth have contended who should purchase the invaluable good ! O consider the Bible is as precious a treasure now, as it would be if there were but one Bible in the world ! As surely will it guide that happy possessor to heaven, who with child-like docility makes it his perpetual guide.*

(w) Ps. cxix. 9, 103, 104.

(x) Ps. xix. 7-11.

(y) Isa. lxvi. 1, 2.

* These ideas are not copied from Mr. Dudley's work on the Bible Society, but are extracted from a manuscript of the author's, written ten or twelve years before that work was published.

The justly celebrated Sir William Jones, one of the brightest geniuses and most distinguished scholars of the eighteenth century, observes, "I have carefully and regularly perused these holy Scriptures, and am of opinion, that the volume, independently of its divine origin, contains more sublimity, purer morality, more important history, and finer strains of eloquence, than can be collected from ALL other books, in whatever language they may have been written." It is related, that the eminent English poet Collins, in the latter part of his mortal career, "withdrew from study, and travelled with no other book than an English Testament, such as children carry to school. When a friend

§ 5. The Bible has been the instrument of producing true piety that has for many ages existed upon earth. the world deprived of the sun, light and heat and life expire for want of its vivifying beams, and all would be one mass of barrenness and death. Were the world deprived of the Bible, it would soon present one deplorable and unmingled wickedness. Nothing would meet the eye but pollution and crime. Hell might exult in a complete conquest, and claim this world as a province of its own. Were the myriads of mankind not one hair of heaven were found ; but all thronging to destruction together, would be from the darkness of spiritual night, to the darkness of eternal perdition. It may confidently be asserted, that no one who slight the Bible is virtuous ; and that no one who slight it feels its power on the heart, and conforms to its precepts. Infidels may rave at such assertions :—let them. They are monuments of the truth, which excites their reflection. They show what man is, when he slight the Bible.

Let it never be forgotten by you, that those Christians whose piety has shone with the brightest lustre, whose lives have been fullest of immortality, are those who have most valued the word of God. It is related of Renty, a French nobleman of most eminent piety, that he used every day on his knees to read three chapters of the word of God. On the other hand, how many Christians, even eminent piety, when leaving the world, have lamented their folly in not having studied the Scriptures more than human writings less. “ When Salmasius, who was one of the most consummate scholars of his time, came to the end of his life, he saw cause to exclaim bitterly against himself. He said he, ‘ I have lost a world of time ! time, the most precious thing in the world ! whereof had I but one year, it should be spent in David’s Psalms and Paul’s Epistles. Oh ! sirs,’ said he again to those about him, ‘ mind this, less, and God more ! ’ ” * When that eminent Christian took it into his hand, out of curiosity to see what companion a man had chosen—‘ I have only one book,’ said he, ‘ but that is the best.’ ”—*Lives of the Poets*, vol. iv. John Locke, so distinguished as a philosopher, the latter part of his life studied scarcely any thing but the word of God. When asked which was the surest way for a young man to attain a knowledge of the Christian religion, he replied, “ Let him study the *Holy Scriptures*, especially the *New Testament*. Therein are contained the words of *life*. It hath GOD for its author—SALVATION for its end—and without any mixture of error, for its matter.”

* Simpson’s Plea for Religion.

James Hervey, who died in triumph, "apprehended himself to be near the close of life, with eternity full in view, he wrote to a friend at a distance to tell him what were his sentiments in that awful situation. 'I have been too fond,' said he, 'of reading every thing valuable and elegant that has been penned in our language, and been peculiarly charmed with the historians, orators, and poets of antiquity: but were I to renew my studies, I would take my leave of those accomplished trifles: I would resign the delights of modern wits, amusement and eloquence, and devote my attention to the Scriptures of Truth. I would sit with much greater assiduity at my divine Master's feet, and desire to know nothing in comparison of Jesus Christ, and him crucified.' "

§ 6. Consider the Scriptures as a message from God to you on the most momentous subjects. A new world is here presented to you. An amazing eternity appears to overwhelm the poor moments of time. Life is a span, and death is the way to an immense unmeasured life. Read the message of your God; the discoveries that it makes, it makes to you. To you it points out a second life; to you it unveils an eternal world. Your thoughts it leads beyond the grave. The judgment it discloses, is that at which you must appear. To your God in it reveals a Saviour and a heaven, the gift of redeeming love;—or a hell, the dire desert of sin. To your view he presents the spirits of the just, washed in the blood of the Lamb, and triumphing in the fulness of joy, and bids you be not slothful, but a follower of them, who through faith and patience inherit the promises.

§ 7. What is there in human science compared with discoveries so important? What is there in the letters of friends, the dearest and the best beloved, compared with that book, which is an epistle from your God? What are those studies in which youth is so often employed, and much of manhood spent, compared with the knowledge of *that* book—that one book, which God has given? that one book, which guides the soul to lasting peace? that one book, which disperses the shadows, clouds, and darkness, that hang over the grave? that one book, which directs those who love its truth, to glory and honour that will endure when "stars and sun have lost their light?"

There is one view in which the Scriptures are important

ledge of its countless volumes ; yet how vain, when i
short years all must be forgotten in the dust ! How
that knowledge, which the word of God imparts ! T
tends its blessings through eternity, and will diffuse u
good, in ages so remote in the depths of eternity, that
man thought ever reached, no human calculation c
proached them. Or think of appearing in the pre
God—a deathless spirit, appearing to receive a do
never can be changed ! All the boasted wisdom of
science can afford you no aid in the awful prospe
there is one book, one precious though oft neglecte
that discovers all we need to know. Should not that
prized ? That book is the Bible. Other books are f
but this for eternity ! other knowledge amuses a fe
moments here, this directs to never-ending good h
Other wisdom pleases or profits for the transient day
this is the source of unfailing blessings for infinite pe
yond the hour when stars and sun shall cease to sh
“rolling years shall cease to move.” Other learni
gain the applause of a few frail creatures, whose appla
soon be hushed for ever by the hand of death ; bu
knowledge will direct the soul to the raptures of eter
and insure the approbation of the King of kings,

CHAPTER XV.

ON THE LORD'S SUPPER.

BEFORE the Lord Jesus left this transitory world, he instituted the sacred ordinance, in which to the end there was to be a commemoration of his dying love. Of the evangelists have recorded the institution of this ordinance. The substance of their accounts when brought into one, furnishes an impressive view of its obligation and sign. "And as they were eating, Jesus took bread, and blessed it, and brake it, and gave it to the disciples, and they ate, eat; this is my body," which is given for you: "IN REMEMBRANCE OF ME."^b "And he took the cup and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, Drink ye all of it: for this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins;"^c and they all drank of it. And he said unto them, This is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many. Verily I say unto you, I shall drink no more of the fruit of the vine, until that day that I shall drink it new in the kingdom of God."^d

After the holy Jesus had left this world, and returned to his throne, he communicated by divine revelation to the Apostle Paul, an account of the institution and design of this ordinance.^e *

att. xxvi. 26. (b) Luke xxi. 19. (c) Matt. xxvi. 27, 28.
(d) Mark xiv. 23—25. (e) 1 Cor. xi. 23—29.

Every reader of the sacred volume, who makes that holy book his guide, will find in the brief scriptural statements respecting this holy ordinance, a powerful antidote to the principal errors that have been broached respecting it. It maintains, that the wafer its priests offer, is the body and blood of Christ; and has murdered myriads for rejecting this monstrous absurdity: they declare, that it was *bread* which Jesus took and brake. Popery reserves wine for its anti-christian priests, and withholds the cup from the people. Jesus said, Drink ye *all* of it; and his apostle describes the members of the Corinthian church, as drinking of the cup, as well as eating of the bread. No absurdity however can be too great, no abomination too vile, no error too heathenish, and no cruelty too atrocious, for popery, which is the mother of harlots and abominations, and of all manner of iniquities, is the work of the devil, as the able writer, Mr. Cecil, described as Satan's masterpiece. A re-

MOTIVES FOR COMMEMORATING

an a Christian, who feels unspeakable obligations to the
ble Saviour, read these impressive portions of the word
od, and not perceive his duty, and the most powerful
ves for obedience.

Do this in remembrance of me." Can any command
ore plain, more positive, more reasonable, or more im-
ant? Do this.—Attendance at the Lord's table is not a
ect left to human choice; but to every disciple of Jesus
express and solemn command is—Do this. And the
mand has sanctions superior to those of even his other
epts. It was uttered almost by his dying lips. It was
n the same night in which he was betrayed; and after
scension was repeated in the revelation made to the apos-
aul. To neglect this ordinance is thus far to reject the
ority of the Lord of heaven, and to violate an
positive command, enforced by the most solemn
that even the word of God contains. If then
ect the Saviour's table, where is your faith, your
obedience?

2. When the design of this ordinance is consider-
ect is presented in a still more impressive light.
l, obedience is enforced by motives springing from
gn, and pleasing in the extreme; on the other, dis-
appears peculiarly flagrant, because it resists all
ming and impressive motives. Behold the Son

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remembrance of me. Cold is the heart that can forget
 old the heart that delights not to cherish the remem-
 such a friend. Follow him from the table, where
 the bread, to the cross on which he died. There he
 sins numberless as the drops of morning dew, and
 e mountains that pierce the skies. There he brings
 everlasting righteousness, and opens wide the gate of
 There he dies, and dies for you; dies that you may
 ds his heart's blood to wash away your sins; and
 his Father's frown, that on you, a poor, ruined child
 and woe, his Father may for ever smile. For you
 ased peace, by agonies intolerably severe. To you
 heaven. Your Shepherd would he be through the
 s of time; and crown the long eternity that awaits
 glory, honour, and happiness. In those many
 in his Father's house, where he is now exalted at
 hand of power, he would give you a peaceful dwell-
 those regions, where as the Lamb that was slain, he
 his flock to living fountains of waters, and where
 l wipe away all tears from their eyes, he would en-
 with all the treasures of eternal life. Compared with
 ense benevolence, what are human benefactors, the
 ie greatest, and the best! Their kindness, when it
 ightest, and glows with the warmest fervour, is more
 ant compared with his, than the glimmering of a
 rm compared with the meridian sun. What grateful
 ons then does he deserve! All his dying love, and
 ring care; all he has done for your salvation, all he
 all he will do through eternity, should unite to im-
 precept on your heart, and to render it the most de-
 precept in the book of God. "This do in remem-
 me." Can they be Christians who hesitate to obey
 recommended by such a design, as that of remem-
 ach a friend! Will not the Christian rather say to
 Holy Redeemer, thou hast united my happiness and
 bidding me remember thee. O thou divine friend!
 remember thee while memory keeps its seat within
 ; and rather let my right hand forget its cunning,
 eart forget to move, my pulse to beat, my tongue to
 y eyes to see, than I forget thee, whose dying love
 . eternal salvation for my ruined soul!"

God in their salvation, through eternal ages, was secured by his atonement. If that had not been effected, the world must have been for ever lost ; heaven must have shut its gates against all the inhabitants of the earth. Redeeming love must ever have resounded through all regions. No child of Adam must ever have been lost from God. The wisdom and love of God in man's redemption must never have been displayed. The triumph of heaven would have been complete, and the earth have been an ample nursery for hell. On this one event all things were suspended. This one was effected. Jesus dying glorified the law and made it honourable, atoned for sin and rescued the sinner. The way to heaven was opened. Myriads, admitted there, in consequence of their sacrifice even before it was offered, were confirmed in heaven, and the way prepared to that abode for millions more. The plans of the wicked one were baffled. A display of the love and wisdom of God, that will shine brightly for ever, then commenced. Eternity may roll away its years ; but never will this event be forgotten ;—this ever glorious day, when heaven will owe perhaps more than half its inhabitants to the love and wisdom of God, and all the praises of redeeming love, in which thousands of angels will for ever join :—this event, to which

ompared with this ! Their creation would never have called forth songs of eternal praise, so fervent, so lofty, so expressive of infinite benefits, as this event will elicit. And glorious as God shines when he appears the Creator of cherubim and seraphim, of angels, archangels, principalities, and powers, yet their creation would never have invested him with half that glory, which shines around him, as a just God and yet a Saviour. And shall that one amazing, astonishing, overwhelming event, the atoning death of Jesus, thus be remembered to eternity in worlds of light—thus to eternity fill heaven with its sweetest praise, and invest the character of God with its most radiant glories—shall the hearts and songs of the redeemed be full of it for ever and ever—and shall we not remember it with gratitude and delight ?—Will you not listen to him who says, “ Do this in remembrance of me ? ”

§ 4. Perhaps you have done it with repeated delight. Persevere: do it till he come to call you from the sorrows of time, to all the blessings of eternal life. But perhaps I address one that has hitherto lived careless of this sacred ordinance, and disobedient to the Saviour's will. Why do you act thus ? Perhaps you reply,

Obj. 1. I apprehend I am not fit to approach the Lord's table, and partake of an ordinance so solemn.

Ans. This objection must spring either from a consciousness that you are a stranger to converting grace, or from incorrect views of the gospel of Christ.

If you are a stranger to converting grace ; if you know not what it is to flee from sin and ruin to the Saviour ; if you are the slave of allowed sin ; then indeed you are unfit to approach this sacred table. But while this is your condition, you are unfit for heaven, and are really and truly fit for hell. The same remark will apply if you know that you are not decided in your acceptance of the Saviour, but halting between him and the world ; an almost-Christian, and no more. You are unfit ; but then the reason is, you have no part in Christ : you are unfit for heaven, and if you die as you are, sure of not entering there.

But perhaps your fear springs from incorrect views of the gospel. When one who professes to love and follow Christ says, I am not worthy to approach his table, it seems to show that the heart is yielding to a self-righteous bias, and that the

professed believer, instead of seeking acceptance Jesus, is depending on some fancied personal is not as a worthy creature, but as an unworthy believer, that you should commemorate the S. What does the ordinance point out to you, reference to a worthiness of yours? Is not its remind you, that when you were yet a condemned ungodly creature, without strength, Christ died

Perhaps you add,

Obj. 2. I am not absolutely convinced that it is improper for me to attend to this holy ordinance, on account of many scruples respecting the propriety of my

Ans. Your scruples are either well founded, or without any foundation. If they are well founded, you are in such a state as gives occasion for them. You have no sufficient ground for them, you sin if you do not remove them. Were you heir to a rich estate, and you had doubts about the title-deed, would you not hasten to obtain the best advice you could obtain? Have you done so on a subject of importance? Have you disclosed your scruples to any other intelligent and pious persons? If you seem that the case truly is this—you are little more than a rebel against the Saviour's authority or obey his precepts.

Obj. 3. It is true I have neglected communion with the church of Christ; but the cause of my neglect is the wickedness of some, that were professors of religion.

Ans. Will this excuse avail you at the day of judgment? If they have been hypocrites, will this justify you? Suppose that the apostle Paul, when ordered to preach the gospel, had replied, No, Lord; I love thy gospel, but I will never preach it; for I have loved it once: nor will I ever join thy people; for they have not longed to them. What would the Saviour have said to him? If boundless mercy had not changed him, he would have been left to go on in pride and disobedience, and have all his professed love to the gospel, to travel with you rebel against Christ's authority because some professors have dishonoured him, take care lest you do the same in your case.

Obj. 4. I acknowledge that I neglect communion at the Lord's table; but the reason is, my mind is vexed and troubled, by the conduct of one who attends there. He has said some very unwarrantable things about me.

Ans. Are you to fall out with the ordinances of the Lord Jesus Christ, because a brother or sister has fallen out with you? Are you to disobey the Son of God, because a friend has used a harsh word respecting you, or done an unkind action? Is your regard to the Lord's precepts, is your love to his ordinances, is your pleasure in remembering him, so small, that the unkind conduct of an imperfect fellow-sinner should lead you to disobey his commands, and to slight his ordinances? Blush at such weakness, and such weak attachment to the best of friends. Be assured this objection commonly springs from unmortified pride. You are probably indulging in rancour and resentment. While you indulge such hellish dispositions, what is your professed religion worth? Unless you forgive you will never be forgiven. But if you feel not these passions, let not the unkind conduct of a fellow-sinner keep you from that ordinance, which reminds you of him who died for all your sins. Go there, and think that ten thousand talents are forgiven you, and forgive and forget an erring brother's debt of a hundred pence.

Obj. 5. I love the Saviour, and wish to follow him; but I fear coming to his table, lest I should eat and drink unworthily, and thus eat and drink damnation to myself. This leads me to neglect his command.

Ans. It is probable that your fears are founded on mistake. To eat and drink unworthily, and to partake of this ordinance with a deep sense of entire unworthiness, are two things as distinct as possible. The sin of eating and drinking unworthily, is committed when persons commune at the Lord's table in a careless, irreverent manner. So did the Corinthians, when some were hungry and others were drunken.

But probably the idea you attach to the expression, eating and drinking unworthily, is of quite a different description, and consequently you have quite mistaken its meaning. They who were once the chief of sinners, but who have fled to Jesus for salvation, unworthy as they feel themselves, do not eat and drink unworthily, when commemorating his death, who is their hope. But the proud moralist, the good-hearted

young man, or innocent young woman, as the
 them, who never knew their sinfulness, and
 is no more than a little morality, and an outwa
 they come to this sacred table do eat and drink

Perhaps you have misunderstood the mean
 pression, eating and drinking damnation. It
 the connexion the word does not signify futu
 but temporal judgments; for the apostle ad
 cause, (viz. eating and drinking unworthily) r
 and sickly among you, and many sleep." Sick
 were the judgment that the members of the Co
 incurred, by their irreverent behaviour at th
 But so different was the judgment they endure
 tion, that it was sent to preserve them from
 doom; for the apostle adds, "When we are
 chastened of the Lord, that we should not
 with the world."^a

§ 6. This sacred ordinance should be trea
 liar degree of reverence. "Let a man exami
 so let him eat of that bread and drink of th
 feelings we should cherish at the Saviour's tal
 deep self-abasement, sincere gratitude, fervent
 creasing devotedness to the Son of God. Go
 cred ordinance in a light, irreverent way. (C
 self-examination, as to the state of your soul,
 gress in the divine life. Go not there to perfo
 to enjoy a privilege. And O, go there with a
 ing the Lord's body. Tremble at the thought
 with a light, irreverent mind of the memorials o
 love. Place yourself as before his cross, and
 an expiring Redeemer, devote yourself anew t
 one subject of self-examination, before partaki
 be, how far the resolutions formed at the pre
 nity have been regarded by you. Pursue this c
 ing on the Spirit's aid, and though you shoul
 the unworthiest of the unworthy, yet you wi
 drink unworthily.

Often improve this sacred privilege. It ap
 primitive Christians very frequently, even we
haps oftener, partook of the Lord's supper.

(a) 1 Cor. xi. 31, 32.

with proper views it will nourish every grace, strengthen every virtue, and promote your growing meetness for that world of felicity, where though this ordinance will cease, yet the event it commemorates will be celebrated in the triumphal anthems of the redeemed for ever and for ever.

§ 7. There are many lamentable instances, in which communicants at the table of the Lord manifest a declension in religion by a disposition to neglect that sacred ordinance; and, at the same time, delude themselves with the notion, that they are not going to give up religion altogether. Some extracts from a letter drawn up with the design of sending it to a young female, who was falling into this deplorable condition, may perhaps without impropriety conclude these brief observations on the supper of the Lord. This young woman, while expressing her wish to neglect the Lord's table, professed that she should continue her attendance at public worship.

"A sincere desire to promote your spiritual welfare leads me to trouble you with these lines. Be assured they are written with an earnest wish for your everlasting welfare. Read them seriously, and weigh their purport as carefully as you would do on a dying bed: and as you love your own soul, consider well what you are doing, before you decide on what I fear will prove one of the most fatal actions of your life. Let me be plain with you. That plainness proceeds from love to your soul. Consider then, my friend, what you are doing, and whom you are pleasing by doing so; think what will be the probable consequences of the step you wish to take, and how you will view it at another day; and remember that the reasons of your conduct, whatever they are, must be examined by the Judge of all.

"Consider what you are doing. You wish to leave the church of Christ. Can you leave it without plunging into sin? and when separated from it, can you help leading a life of sin? You cannot, for you will live a life of disobedience to the Redeemer. If you were to live uttering an oath with every sentence, you would think this a wicked life, and it would be so. Its wickedness would arise from its disobedience to him, who said, 'Swear not at all.' But you know that it is as much his will that his disciples should be united in church fellowship, as it is that they should avoid profane language; and it is as great a sin to break Christ's commands

in private and in public, declared that you devoted to the Lord? and would you fly from these solemnities? Have you vowed to the Lord, and would you back? O, were you to live henceforth free from a yet this one of refusing and neglecting this sacred would bring a dreadful load of guilt upon your soul; you could not say to your Redeemer, 'Lord commanded me to remember thy dying love, in thanksgiving; but I will forget it, and slight thy at Thou hast taught me that I should be united with but I will forsake it, and cherish no such union.' not, I know you could not, say this in words; but upon it the eternal Judge reads this as the language of your present wishes. In his sight as well as in ours, as loudly as words.

"Think whom you are pleasing by your presence. Not your God. In his sight obedience is better than sacrifice. Not your Redeemer; for he says, 'If a man love me, he will keep my words.' But be sure, as the wolf is deluged he sees the sheep straying from the fold, and exposed to his assaults; so are those infernal spirits pleased with your conduct, who watch for your halting, and wait for your destruction.

from your Redeemer to destruction. While leading a life of obedience to his institutions, if he should vouchsafe you his blessing, you have no reason to expect it in such a measure, as if you faithfully followed him, and therefore will surely soon forsake him altogether. You will also be deluded by the watchful care of every religious friend. If you know, there are those who are willing to raise you up; if you are betrayed, who are anxious to bring you back; but when separated from the flock of Christ, every advantage of this kind is lost to you. You will be numbered again with the inverted world, and most probably will walk in the way of the multitude. And should your conduct, as it most probably will, end in total backsliding, surely you know who will be the cause. The latter end of such is worse than their beginning.

Think also how you will view your conduct at another time.

If you disregard this faithful warning; if by degrees you depart from the truth, oh, what bitterness and anguish will be upon you, when at death you review your conduct. When your spirit is just quitting its mortal tabernacle; when your flesh and heart fail, how will you mourn the fatal error when you began to slight the Redeemer's will! how will you regret that you had been faithful to your Lord, whoever may be your present master! Even if your present conduct should not lead to any sad consequences; if its issue should not be total destruction; if you should keep up some of the form, and even some of the power, of religion; yet would it not fill your moments with doubts and fears, to remember that you had led a life of wilful and obstinate disobedience to one important part of the blessed Redeemer's will. Will not those pleasures which now satisfy your mind, then appear but vanity and folly? And after all, what are those reasons, those excuses? Are they such as will stand the test of the judgment of Jesus Christ? Alas, does not conscience tell you that the true reason of all is, that you are not so much alive to God as you once were; that you are less concerned about his blessings; and, at least in heart, fallen from what you once enjoyed."

The fears expressed in this letter appeared afterwards too well founded. The young woman by degrees dropped every thing like the form of religion; and a few years after her

withdrawal, it was stated to the writer, that she had ever ed with her Bible, as she declared it would no longer any use to her. Thus the way of the wicked seduceth

CHAPTER XVI.

ON DISPLAYING CHRISTIAN LOVE, ON GLORIFYING
BY DOING GOOD, AND ON LOVE TO ENEMIES.

§ 1. **T**O a serious mind connexion with the flock of will appear the most honourable of earthly cions. In it a union is commenced, which strengthen other unions dissolve, and which will be continued t eternity. However despised by many, however slight many more, a vital union with the flock of the Rede a union with the family of God and the heirs of heav you have entered into this sacred connexion, havi given yourself to the Lord, and then to his church, yo happiness, the honour of religion, and the comfort o connected with you, will much depend upon the ma which you discharge the duties of so important a r You may be loved, and prized, and honoured, or else pitied, and disliked. There are many in the flock of viour, who pursue a steady course of consistent piet; the day they enter the church below, to that which i them to the family above. Humble and kind, watch holy, beloved and loving, they move forward with a step to the home on which their best affections centre. light shines more and more unto the perfect day ; n declines, but shines brightest at its setting ; and v sets, sets to rise brighter in eternity. Their pastors a Christian friends never mourn on their account, till they their departure hence ; and with such sorrow mingle g at the remembrance of what they were, and in the con of what they are. How different from those professors

gion, whose inconsistencies excite many a fear that they are strangers to converting grace; whose harsh, or unkind, or conceited, or selfish ways, are calculated to provoke disgust rather than win affection; and whose departure is darkened with a cloud of apprehensions, that they are perhaps lost for ever. That you may be a happy, and useful, and act as an honourable, member of the church of Christ, pay peculiar attention to the numerous precepts addressed immediately to his disciples, with which the New Testament abounds.

§ 2. Consider that Christianity is peculiarly a religion of love. Holy love is its heart and soul. Love was its origin in the breast of the Eternal. Love directed its progress, when the Son of God assumed our nature to atone for sin. Love governs its sincere votaries—the constraining love of Christ; and love will swell the triumphal songs of heaven. Cherish this godlike disposition, for love is of God.

§ 3. The following are some of the ways in which this heavenly disposition must be manifested to those who are travelling with you to heaven, and wherever applicable to those who are not so.

By rejoicing with them in their comforts; by sympathizing with them in their sorrows; and according to your utmost ability relieving them in their afflictions. “Let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith.”^a “Rejoice with them that rejoice, and weep with them that weep.”^b “Bear ye one another’s burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ.”^c “Comfort the feeble-minded, support the weak.”^d “Whoso hath this world’s good, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him?”^e

In pursuing such labours of love, the Christian’s time and strength are to be employed to administer to the comfort of others, as well as to his own. The apostle Paul said, “So labouring ye ought to support the weak, and to remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he said, It is more blessed to give than to receive.”^f So far should the Christian be from heaping up superfluities for self-gratification, that he is to deny himself for the sake of promoting the benefit of others.

(a) Gal. vi. 10.
(d) 1 Thess. v. 14.

(b) Rom. xii. 15.
(e) 1 John iii. 17.

(c) Gal. vi. 2.
(f) Acts xx. 34, 35.

“Sell that ye have, and give alms; provide yourself which wax not old, a treasure in the heavens that faileth not. To those who act this part, in the day of final account the Judge and King will say, “Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: for I was an hungred, and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me in: naked, and ye clothed me: I was sick, and ye visited me: I was in prison, and ye came unto me. I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me.” To those who act not this part, whatever may be their profession, or their knowledge, or their zeal, or their piety, the King will say, “Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels: for I was an hungred, and ye gave me no meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me no drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me not in: naked, and ye clothed me not: sick, and in prison, and ye visited me not. Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye did not do these things to one of the least of these, ye did it not to me. And these shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal.”

Christian love to brethren in the Lord is to be self-denying, bearing with their weaknesses, by subduing a selfish

of himself."^k "Let no man seek his own, but every
 other's welfare."^l

Christian love is to be manifested by visiting the sick and

"Pure religion, and undefiled, before God and the
 Father is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their
 affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world."^m
 "I was sick, and ye visited me."ⁿ This duty is by many
 neglected, though the Saviour lays so much stress upon
 it, as even to mention it in the solemn account
 of actions that will meet his approbation, when he ap-
 pears the Judge of all. Those who are unable to feed the
 or clothe the naked, may yet visit and console the
 afflicted. Would every disciple of Jesus make a point
 of regularly paying one such visit in a fortnight; of spending
 half an hour in that time in consoling, or praying with, and
 visiting the afflicted, how much good would be done! and
 how small an expense of time and exertion! A church of
 three hundred members would thus in a year pay two thousand
 such benevolent visits.

The spirit is to be displayed by forbearing whatever
 might injure a weaker Christian's soul, even though the thing
 would be harmless. "When ye sin so against the bre-
 ther that he be wounded, ye sin against Christ.
 Therefore, if meat make my brother to offend, I will eat no
 more thereof lest I make my brother to offend."

Christian love is to be shown by attending to those little
 acts of kindness, which may promote the comfort of others.
 "Be courteous." Jesus said, "Ye call me Master
 and say well; for so I am. If I then, your
 Master, have washed your feet, ye also ought to
 wash one another's feet. For I have given you an example,
 that ye should do as I have done to you."^o One of the hum-
 blest acts of kindness in Judea, where sandals were worn,
 was to have been washing the feet. Of this kindness the
 Saviour set an instructive example, an example not
 to inculcate on all his followers that particular action,
 but the spirit of humility and kindness, which indulged will
 find offices in a thousand varied ways.

xv. 1, 2. (D) 1 Cor. x. 24. (m) James i. 27. (n) Matt. xxv. 36.
 (o) viii. 12, 13. (p) 1 Pet. iii. 8. (q) John xiii. 13—15.

their removal. "If thy brother shall trespass against thee and tell him his fault between thee and him alone: hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother. But if he hear thee, then take with thee one or two more, that the mouth of two or three witnesses, every word may be established. And if he shall neglect to hear them, tell it unto the church: but if he neglect to hear the church, let him be to thee as a heathen man and a publican."

§ 4. For the promotion and restoration of harmony and peace, there is not a more important rule than this in the church, and few so little heeded. Were it regarded, probability of strife would be speedily extinguished in ninety-nine out of every hundred. The prosperity of the church, the honour of religion, the peace of individuals, and the comfort of families, would all be advanced. But instead of this plain and positive law, the generality of those who profess religion act as if there were no such law in the church. Some, instead of expostulating in the Spirit of Christ with an offending friend, tittle-tattle about the real or fancied wrong till the report, with a hundred exaggerations, spread half a town. At the same time they greedily drink up the evil report, respecting the person who has injured them; and these again they give circulation, and thus become

trample under foot the law of God. Were they to plunge into **idolatry** or drunkenness, they could but rebel against the Son of God, and they who make light of this solemn law of his are as truly rebels against him. Again, they are commonly **guilty** of slander and lying. The evil reports they greedily **receive** are most probably in a great degree false, and when **they** circulate these falsehoods they become guilty of scandal and lying. In connexion with this they are guilty of indulging **the** worst and most hellish passions of the human heart, **rancour**, malice, and resentment: if they did not indulge these **hell-born** passions they would not lend a pleased and attentive ear to every idle tale against an offending friend, nor be **pleased**, if that person had been ever so wrong, to publish his **shame**; they see the mote in their brother's eye, but they **have** a beam in their own.

Others pursue a different course; but a course of rebellion **as** real, though not carried to the same extent against the authority of the Lord Jesus Christ. Instead of taking the steps **with** an offending friend which he ordains, they sit down in **sullen** pride, and resolve to have no more to do with him. **Instead** of going and telling him his fault in private, and in **the** spirit of Christian affection, they at once treat him as a **heathen** man and a publican. The rebellion in such cases **against** the authority of the Lord is as complete as in the **former**. Nothing can be more opposite than his law and **their** conduct.

This wicked conduct is often rendered still more wicked, **from** the flagrant fact, that it is often indulged where there is **no** clear evidence that a brother has been an offender; and **where** perhaps there is nothing but vague report; yet instead **of** inquiring into the truth of this report, it is at once assumed **to** be correct, and that course of wickedness commences which **has** now been faintly delineated.

If you are one that thus trample under foot the authority of Christ, that pay no attention to his positive law upon this **subject**, mock him no longer with the title of your Lord and Saviour, while you are a real rebel against him; but go and **join** the ranks to which you belong, the ranks of his enemies, **the** swearers, the drunkards, the liars, the scoffers, the blasphemers; they are but rebels, and while you neglect this **precept**, *when a brother has offended you, you are as really a*

thinketh no evil; hopeth all things; endureth :
“ In malice be ye children.”^v “ And be ye kind
other, tender-hearted, forgiving one another, even
Christ's sake has forgiven you.”^w “ Peter said,
oft shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive
seven times? Jesus saith unto him, I say not unto
seven times; but, Until seventy times seven.”^x

Christian love is to be displayed by hating t
and by endeavours to promote harmony and pe
all evil speaking be put away from you.”^y “ See
pursue it.”^z “ Have peace one with another.”^a
are the peace-makers: for they shall be called the
God.”^b

Christian love is to be shown by a watchful con
our brethren no cause of offence, and, if we hav
kindly to any, by speedily seeking reconciliatio
fess your faults one to another, and pray one for
“ If thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there
that thy brother hath aught against thee; leave th
before the altar, and go thy way; first be recon
brother, and then come and offer thy gift.”^d

§ 6. Christian love is to be displayed by warni
of sin, and by friendly reproof. “ Thou shalt n

To reprove sin in fellow-disciples, or in others, is an act of sincere friendship, and an important Christian duty; but in discharge much prudence should be exercised. Sometimes there is a propriety in openly reproving the profane or indecent conversation of worldly persons. At other times this may be done more effectually by slipping a tract against the sin committed into the offender's hand, or by a friendly private remark. The errors or faults of an offending friend should seldom be publicly reproofed. To converse affectionately with relatives or friends in private, is the far more profitable way of promoting their welfare. Such reproof should never be administered with kindness and affection, not with the authority of a superior, but with the humility of a fellow-sinner.

On excuses for neglecting this duty, nothing more shall here be said than is contained in a short anecdote.—One day a person being with a poor aged Christian, and lamenting a want of firmness to reprove the abandoned when travelling, an excuse had recourse to that passage, "Give not that which is holy unto dogs; neither cast ye your pearls before swine." She seriously and hastily replied, "Oh, Sir, kindly just reproofs are no pearls. Were you to talk to a wicked heathen respecting the love of God shed abroad in the heart by the Holy Ghost, and the pleasures of communion with God, you would cast pearls before swine; but not in proving sin."

§ 7. Christian love is to be manifested by endeavours to promote the spiritual welfare of our brethren in the Lord. Let us consider one another, to provoke unto love, and to good works: exhort one another daily, while it is called Today; lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin.⁽⁴⁾ "Comfort yourselves together, and edify one another." Christian love and humility are to be displayed by receiving with meekness, and thankfulness, the admonitions and proofs of those who wish us well. They are our best friends, whose faithfulness points out our faults, and occasions their correction. They who are too proud to listen to reproof, manifest a dreadful want of Christian spirit. "Let the righteous smite me, it shall be a kindness."⁽⁵⁾ "Whoso loveth instruction, loveth knowledge: but he that hateth reproof is

(4) Heb. iii. 12, 13.

(5) Ps. cxli. 5.

brutish. The way of a fool is right in his own eyes : but he that hearkeneth unto counsel is wise."

Christian love is to be displayed by fervent prayers for the flock of the Lord, and for all mankind. "We pray always for you, that our God would fulfil all the good pleasure of his goodness, and the work of faith with power."^k "I exhort therefore, that, first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men."^l

Finally, Christian love to brethren is to be shown by avoiding divisions, and cherishing unity of Spirit and affection. "Be of one mind; live in peace; and the God of love and peace shall be with you."^m "Mark them which cause divisions, and offences, contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them."ⁿ

§ 8. Cherish the spirit inculcated in these precepts by the authority of the Lord Jesus. Thus act, and you will live esteemed and beloved; a comfort to others, and a comfort to yourself. Thus live, and you will enjoy the fairest evidence that you have passed from death to life; and may indulge an animating hope, that you shall soon join the church triumphant in that happier country, where all the truly pious "shall meet in Christ, and part no more."

While it is your incumbent duty thus to manifest Christian love to the household of faith, it is also your duty, in all those modes which are applicable to the situation and circum-

Kindness, and attention of the people to whom he ministers. **N**othing can be more unchristian than the spirit, which some professors of the gospel manifest towards its ministers;—a spirit of suspicion and distrust, as if they esteemed them tyrants, anxious to grasp power and sway;—a spirit of opposition, which seems bent on thwarting the proceedings of those under whose ministry they sit. These men are a kind of ecclesiastical radicals. They talk of liberty, but their liberty is opposed to the word of God, to human comfort, and social order; it is licentiousness and anarchy; and there is reason to apprehend, that the liberty they, like other radicals, admire, is the liberty of tyrannizing over all around them, or a liberty like the boasted freedom of the United States of America, where while the white man extols liberty, he flogs, and chains, and treats as a brute, the enslaved black that crouches at his feet. A young man just entering on the ministry should yield a respectful deference to experienced Christians, who have become fathers in Christ, and are much more calculated to lead the flock of God than he. But a minister of some experience, who knows the importance of his station, should never suffer a church to lord it over him, and if he feel the spirit of his Master, he will never wish or aim to lord it over them.

If you are connected with a church that enjoys the labours of a faithful minister of the gospel, you enjoy a blessing which the Saviour has bestowed upon you. For such a minister is declared to be the Lord's gift to any people.

A minister of the gospel, as a Christian brother, is entitled to the same Christian kindness and affection, as any other member of the flock of Christ, and to the same displays of Christian love. But, as a person sustaining an important situation in the family of the Saviour, there are other ways in which that love is to be displayed.

On this subject, as well as others, the word of God is the surest guide.

You are to esteem them highly. "We beseech you, brethren, to know them which labour among you, and are over you in the Lord, and admonish you; and to esteem them very highly in love for their work's sake."

To treat their admonitions and advice with deference and

respect; and so far to submit to them as is necessary to enable them comfortably to discharge the duties of overseers of the flock. "Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves: for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account; that they may do it with joy, and not with grief: for that is unprofitable for you."^p

As far as they imitate Christ, it is your duty to imitate them. "Remember them which have the rule over you, who have spoken unto you the word of God; whose faith follow, considering the end of their conversation; Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever."^q

Though the ministerial character is no shield where the conduct is inconsistent with it, yet you are not *lightly* to listen to reports to their disadvantage. "Against an elder receive not an accusation, but before two or three witnesses."^r The remarks on the guilt and mischief of evil speaking apply here with double force. In injuring the character of a minister of the gospel, a peculiar injury is done to religion itself. Parents who profess to value religion, and who are in the habit of criticising and carping at ministers in the hearing of their children, take a ready way to train their children for perdition. Children thus taught by their parents to despise the ministers of the gospel, will most probably go on in sin, till they sink to hell; and may then ascribe their eternal damnation in a great degree to the unchristian conduct of

The members of churches should pray for their pastor, and for each other. The importance of such prayer is strikingly displayed by the earnest desires expressed by the apostle Paul, for the prayers of Christian brethren. If such an apostle, miraculously converted, endowed with the gift of tongues and miracles, who had been taken up into the third heaven, and to whom the Lord had actually said, My grace is sufficient for thee;—if such an apostle needed the prayers of his brethren, and ascribed much to their efficacy, what must ministers of the gospel now do! “Now, I beseech you, brethren, for the Lord Jesus Christ’s sake, and for the love of the Spirit, that ye strive together with me in your prayers to God for me.”^u “Finally, brethren, pray for us, that the word of the Lord may have free course, and be glorified, even as it is with you.”^v “Pray for us.”^w

§ 10. These remarks rest upon the supposition, that the minister you attend is worthy of your confidence and affection. If he be not a man of this description, why do you attend on his ministry? why connect yourself with the church to which he ministers? Your spiritual welfare may be so much promoted by the ministrations of a pious and faithful pastor, that it should be in your esteem an object of the first magnitude, to enjoy such ministrations, and to worship, not where your fancy may be pleased, but where your heart may be impressed with divine truth; where your growth in grace may be advanced; where the preacher in good earnest preaches

revile those for whose support it is intended. The real Christian will act a different part, and bow with submissive deference to the will of God. What is thus contributed to the support of a Christian minister, is not a remuneration for work done, it is not wages for preaching; but it is contributed upon the obvious principle, that ministers and their families have the same natural wants as others. If a minister be not possessed of private property sufficient for the maintenance of his family and himself, those wants must be supplied by his own exertions, or by the contributions of the people to whom he ministers. If they are supplied by his own exertions, his time and attention must necessarily be employed on secular concerns, and diverted from the great work of his calling. In this case the flock will suffer more than he. To prevent this, God has ordained, that they who preach the gospel should live of the gospel. According to this view, an idle, inactive minister, has little claim upon the people of his charge. His time might as well or better be occupied in the shop or the counting-house, as in polite worldly visits, or the study of refined literary trifles of the day, that have no reference to his great work. But he who employs the energies of mind and body in active labours to promote the cause of the Saviour, has an undoubted claim on the people of his charge for support while thus engaged; and they should consider, that were the same labour, and the same portion of energy, and activity, employed in promoting the worldly interests of himself and family, it is probable he would by rapid strides be hastening on to affluence, though now his labours are only accomplished day by day with daily bread.

(u) Rom. xv. 30—32.

(v) 2 Thess. iii. 1.

(w) Heb. xiii. 18.

as for eternity. A Christian should esteem such a pastor as one of the best friends; nor should foibles or imperfections alienate regard; for who on earth has no imperfections? Consider such a friend as the helper of your faith. Be not backward to unfold to him your trials and your conflicts. Treat him as a friend, in whom you can confide; a friend who is anxious to promote your welfare; as an under-shepherd, who watches for your soul. Such conduct will tend to your pastor's comfort, and to the advancement of your best, your eternal interests.

§ 11. Many and important are the motives, that should stimulate you to cherish brotherly love. There is much in the character and situation of your Christian friends, to call this heavenly grace into exercise. They are dear to Christ; are the purchase of his blood; the objects of his care; his flock; his friends; his jewels. Thus dear to him, should they not be dear to you? They are your fellow-travellers to heaven, with whom you hope to spend eternal days. In heaven the family of Jesus will mutually love for ever, and should not love reign in their hearts through the few dark days of mortal life? The sorrows you now endure they feel; the foes with whom you wrestle they encounter; the desires that glow in your heart animate theirs; the hopes that cheer you encourage them. Now, too, the God you love they love; in the Saviour whom you trust they confide; the blood that cleansed you has cleansed them; the Spirit that dwells in you dwells in them; and all that enriches you is their portion. You hope hereafter to inhabit the same heaven; to belong to the same family; and, beneath the unclouded lustre of the same eternal day, to ascribe blessing and honour to the same Redeemer. Thus united by renewing grace, united in privileges, in trials, in joys and in sorrows, in hopes and in prospects, in friends and inheritance, united in bands that are to last for ever, should you not be united in heart and affection? Love and gratitude to your exalted Lord also call for love to your fellow-pilgrims. He commands his disciples to manifest such love, and in the earnestness of his heart prayed that it might be displayed by them.* Will you not devoutly cherish that heavenly grace which is the subject of commands so binding, and prayers so fervent and divine?

(*) John xiii. 34; xvii. 11, 23.

regard your Redeemer's honour you must cherish by this," said he, "shall all men know that ye are as, if ye have love one to another."^y So exemplary were of the early Christians to each other, that even enemies bore testimony to its power, when they said, "these Christians love one another." This love elevated their divine religion so much, that the apostate Julian represented their love to each other as constituting a little to spread Christianity.

regard the peace of your own mind, you must cher-
 ishly love. The word of God declares the possession
 of love one of the clearest evidences of conversion, and
 is to be as clear an evidence of a state of sin and
 death. We know that we have passed from death unto
 life because we love the brethren: he that loveth not his
 brethren, he is in death."^z In short, of such immense im-
 portance is this heavenly grace, that all the knowledge, gifts,
 and graces in the world, are nothing without love.^a

The religion of the gospel demands from its votaries
 the exertion of their different powers, in promoting the
 glory of God and the welfare of man. The Lord Jesus re-
 ceives his disciples as servants, whose Master intrusts them
 with the management of *his* property, which during his absence they
 must improve. All have something intrusted to them to

improve. While some have five talents, others have two ;
 and some have the least have one. Yet these talents are
 all *own*. He delivered to them *his* goods. The Lord
 intrusted at least one talent, perhaps many, to your
 time, your sabbaths, your means of grace, your
 your opportunities for usefulness in any way, your
 your strength, whatever you possess that can benefit
 glorify God, is a talent intrusted to you by the eter-
 nal Father. They all belong to him. They are but lent to
 you. reckon all you have the Lord's. Important motive
 for improvement ! Impressively important, when it is considered
 that a reward heavenly love will bestow, where even one
 has been sedulously improved ; and how the mere neg-
 lecting even one, renders him to whom it was lent
 an unprofitable and a slothful servant.

Many are the modes by which Christians may pro-

iii. 35.

(^y) 1 John iii. 14, 19.

(^a) 1 Cor. xiii.

number of persons are said to have been converted by these means.

Seconding the exertions of Christian ministers, by inducing friends or neighbours to hear the word of God, by encouraging, and directing, such as appear to be under the influence of serious impressions. Incalculable good has thus been effected, by the divine blessing, been effected. It is recorded of a Baptist church in Yorkshire, that soon after its formation, a member, with this view, "made it a point of duty to endeavour to bring one careless sinner under the influence of the gospel, and to use every Scriptural method to lead him to embrace it. And when the object of his mission was enrolled himself among the followers of Christ, he sought for another wandering sheep, that he might bring also into the fold of the church. Were such conduct general among the friends of Christ, an immense good would result from it."

Some years ago the writer visited a young man in this world in peace and hope. He belonged to a family in which most or all were strangers to religion, and he had, a few years of his happy departure, had been a Christian friend frequently invited him to the house of God. These invitations were often slighted, but he at last

er had rolled away without success, she went once to visit her acquaintance, and was so affected by disappointment, that she burst into tears. The other replied: she went to the house of prayer; she felt the divine truth, and became a monument of saving grace. The writer could mention other instances: they were all the disciples of Jesus active, would be many more.

Every mode of usefulness open to all the disciples of Christ, is that of kindly noticing and encouraging those who become hearers of the gospel. It is a frequent case, that persons who have lived without God in the world, frequent the house of prayer. They need instruction, and perhaps impressions, and need encouragement; but acquainted with no Christian friend. If the congregation is numerous, the minister may know nothing of them. They perhaps pine in despondency, or the little spark of piety dies for want of some one to fan it to a flame; but if the members of a church are active, and eager to seize every opportunity for doing good, such persons will soon be directed, and encouraged.

A Christian who watches for opportunities of doing good, may find many; and some that seem insignificant may effect more than the most sanguine calculations. A considerable church exists in a village in Leicestershire, which owed its origin in a great degree, to a pious remark introduced in a business. This impressed the mind of the thoughtless to whom it was addressed. He embraced religion, and his house for preaching. Many who had never before attended the gospel attended. A comfortable house of prayer was opened in this then dark village. Many who have worshipped at that house, there is reason to believe now worship at some other house above, and others are pursuing the path to eternal peace. What cannot God effect, by the feeble means, when Christian zeal directs the conduct of his children!

Travelling or giving away religious books incalculable good may be effected. The same effect may be produced by gratuitously distributing religious tracts. These feeble instruments have been the means of producing important benefits. A tract given away on the road,

or dropped by the highway side, has awakened a prodigal to reflection, and led a child of wrath to the Lamb of God for salvation. Few are there among the followers of the Saviour, who might not pursue many of these modes of usefulness.

Sabbath schools open a wide field for the labours of Christian philanthropy.*

An immense field for usefulness is now offered by Bible and Missionary associations. The active collectors in those institutions, are a most important part of the grand moral machine, by which God is diffusing the gospel of his Son.

§ 14. The physician who would snatch a dying patient from the grave, must form a correct estimate of the malignity of his disease; nor would his benevolence be admired, if he pronounced the plague a harmless disorder. So in all your schemes for usefulness, bear in mind that the objects of your kindness are not beings slightly tainted with corruption, but wholly corrupt and depraved. Are you a parent? you will see many charms in your children. Yet remember they are as depraved as you feel yourself, and as others naturally are. A mere *moral* education may save them from grosser sins, but will never save them from eternal death. Teach them that they are sinners, and lead them to the fountain of salvation. Are you employed in teaching the children of others? or is it friends or neighbours whose salvation you are anxious

s have been the means of leading many to eternal

All the obligations you lie under to the God of love, stimulate your zeal to promote his glory in the salvation of your fallen fellow-creatures. Snatched yourself from the burning pit, should you not strive to snatch others from the same? Redeeming love has displayed to us a salvation as precious as the blood poured out by Jesus upon Calvary—the wealth of heaven which he resigned—free as the air we breathe—and lasting as the eternity of God. Redeeming love has blessed us for both worlds—given us wealth for this world—comfort for misery—hope for despair—forgiveness of sin—deliverance from condemnation—the love of God instead of eternal wrath—life from him—and heaven instead of hell. But these mercies bid us communicate the tidings of them to others. “Let him that heareth say, Come.” Can we be influenced by the love displayed in that gospel, if we do not labour and strive to benefit those who are perishing in sin?

Can pity move? pity must move you here. You see a ruined world—described by God as a world dead in sin and in unbelief, even **ALL DEAD**. Could you spend an hour in a prison filled with malefactors doomed to die? would the mournful spectacle melt your heart into compassion, and your eyes into tears? A more mournful spectacle surrounds the world. Millions of rational and immortal beings are lost, all dead. All hastening to the grave with a steady step, and unless taught of God, all hastening to death that never dies. All dead, all doomed to die, as sinners doomed to hell. It is true, heavenly mercy has opened a path to life from these regions of spiritual death; but how few regard those saving dictates. Excepting a happy few of the high and low, the kings of the earth, and the great men, and the rich men, and the chief priests, and the mighty men, and every bond man and free man, and the bridegroom and the bride, and the young, are dead to God, and dead to sin. Can you be a Christian yourself, if you strive not to snatch the firebrands from the flame? Can you look at a father or a child, a brother or a sister, a husband or a wife, and *think this beloved relative is sinking to eternal*

son of God suffering so much for you, should you not anxiously render to him all that you can crowd into a few fleeting, mortal days? Do you believe that the Son of God abode in this vale of this world of death, for more than thirty months? Do you believe that here he encountered every hardship and all this for you? Do you believe this, if you are concerned about the prosperity of the cause for which he died?—The tongue may say, "Yes," but a more truly answer, "No, you believe it, but you have but the shadow of belief."—Do you believe that through sin, death and perdition were your right lot, but that a divine hand has snatched you from this, and woven for you a garland of unfading glory—has it given you an everlasting rest beyond the scenes of toil? Can you believe this and remain inactive? God forbid you should ever act so base a part! though, alas! by multitudes.

§ 18. In the value of the deathless soul you have another motive for activity. The poor, vain, glittering crowd around you are to live for ever. You are in danger, they know it not; you feel the worth of life, they feel it not.

l; and, O more strange! the soul, which some humanist's pious cares led to the Saviour and to heaven. It should be thus successful in but one instance, this one be a rich reward even for the labours of the longest life. "Which converteth a sinner from the error of his way, save a soul from death, and hide a multitude of sins." "Magical a sight is the execution of a criminal! how much magical the perdition of a soul! How great a benefactor he be esteemed, who might deliver a sinking nation from mine, pestilence, slavery, and the sword! but they are agents of effecting much greater good, who lead only to the Saviour of mankind. It is in the labours of piety, that great events crowd upon each other; perhaps judged little by the world, yet great because influence is extensive as eternity. A Christian is accosted by a poor beggar, poor for time, and poorer for eternity.—He sees the suppliant a trifle, and adds a tract—the beggar reads, he feels, his heart is impressed—he feels his soul flees to the Saviour for salvation. The event is unknown to all the world; the subject of it lives in poverty, as like Lazarus. The same day on which this tract is a mighty battle is fought—hundreds of thousands enter the conflict—the fate of nations is decided by its issue. One of the victors fills the world, and will be handed down to the last age of time. Which is the great event? the death of a poor man? Ah, no! not unless it has more influence on eternity than the death of a poor man. The great event is the poor beggar's conversion. That will be remembered when the trumpet of fame is blown by the archangel's oath, that time shall be no longer. It will be a subject of gratitude and joy, of delight and triumph when the triumphs of contending nations are forgotten, when those nations themselves are swept into oblivion by the storm of destruction.

In addition to all the other powerful motives which stimulate the Christian to activity, there is one which God has assigned as a reason for his unwearied exertions—"The night cometh, in which no man can work," the night of death, that will put an eternal end to all our labours for the glory of God in the salvation of man. The summer's day soon elapses, and he who toils from its dawn till its close, soon has to say, My labour is done. So

time will soon end with those you wish to benefit, and end with you. The parent must shortly cease to instruct his child, and the child to pray for his parent. The sabbath-school teacher must finish his last lesson, and the minister his last sermon, and every follower of Jesus end his last conflict, offer his last prayer, and finish his last attempt to lead poor wandering men to heaven. The night cometh when no man can work. Endeavour then to crowd into the little span of life all the benevolent actions, all the useful services, possible. Have you an opportunity for relieving the afflicted, for instructing the ignorant, for comforting the mourner? Say not, I will improve the next opportunity. You cannot improve the next for this; the next will be a fresh one, that will require its own improvement. To do good twice, is better than to do so once. Be active! be zealous! for the time is short. Think how short is the day of labour! how long, how near, the eternity of rest! Behold the blood-bought crown, which glitters through the skies. Hear the voice which says, "Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might." "They that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars for ever and ever." And O, what is the for ever of heaven! Look to him who became for man's welfare a man of sorrows and of toil. Think of admission to his presence, and there of meeting some snatched by your instrumentality from everlasting night: and

tresses who take pleasure in yours, or in hearing them defamed who have defamed you. But these feelings are as opposite to those the Christian must cherish, as hell is to heaven.

You are solemnly commanded to do no ill to those who may do ill to you. "Say not, I will do so to him as he hath done to me: I will render to the man according to his work."^a "Recompense to no man evil for evil. Avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath."^b

You are not only forbidden to injure enemies, but forbidden to take pleasure in their afflictions. "Rejoice not when thine enemy falleth; lest the Lord see it, and it displease him."^c

Inculcating upon you a disposition like his own, the God of mercy solemnly and imperiously requires from you the forgiveness of injuries and of enemies. The Saviour teaches you when praying for forgiveness, to declare to God that you forgive. "Forgive us our sins; FOR we also forgive EVERY ONE that is indebted to us."^d He adds, "For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you: but if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your heavenly Father forgive your trespasses."^e The divine Saviour calls on his disciples, not merely to forgive an injurer, or an enemy; but to requite injuries by benefits, evil by good. "I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you; that ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven." "Bless them which persecute you: bless, and curse not. Therefore, if thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink. Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good."^f

§ 21. Exemplifying his divine instruction, the holy Jesus while his enemies were nailing him to the cross prayed for mercy on those murderers: "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do."^g His first martyr expired with a similar prayer upon his lips. The duties here inculcated, are at times among the most difficult possible; yet they must be practised, if you would enjoy the Saviour's favour. The proud heart must be made to bend, the resentful heart must be brought to forgive, or your religion will prove an empty

(a) Prov. xx. 22; xxiv. 29.

(b) Rom. xii. 17, 19.

(c) Prov. xxiv. 17, 18.

(d) Luke xi. 4.

(e) Matt. vi. 14, 15.

(f) Rom. xii. 14, 20, 21.

(g) Luke xxiii. 34.

spirit, be candid, be honest, deceive not yourself, deceive your Judge. Say not, I cannot forgive; will not; for be assured, while the grace of Christ for all who seek his aid, if you have enemies who will not forgive, the reason is not that you cannot, but will not. Yet remember, unless you do so mortify as to forgive every enemy, the decree is gone forth shut you out of heaven. Eternal truth has said, give not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses."

Cherish humility, and then it will not be a difficulty to forgive and bless even the bitterest foes. It renders man so prone to resentment, so unwilling to forgive. Think what have been your crimes against the heaven! How vast his goodness! how dire your iniquities! how many your offences! yet how rich, how free in love! Had all the inhabitants of the earth been against you with ceaseless cruelty and hatred; had even witnessed fresh injuries inflicted by them, and freely suffered by you; if considered merely in reference to the guilt of all the ceaseless, causeless enmity of all those who would not have been so great as the guilt of you against your gracious, but much injured God. A

than a spark to the noon-day sun, or a speck of dust to the vast world ?

§ 22. Is the person who has injured you a Christian brother ? Do you believe, that, notwithstanding the conduct you condemn, he is indeed an heir of heaven ? Surely then you should cheerfully forgive. Do you believe that God forgives him ? that the blood of Jesus has washed away his stains ? Do you hope to meet him as a friend, where no dissensions arise ? where an eternal day will be one day of harmony and love ? Are these your hopes ? Ah, what is there by the way that should render those at discord here, who hope to be friends to all eternity ? Or view the subject of dispute as you will, view it from the edge of the grave, or from eternity : “ I never,” says one of the best of uninspired writers, “ heard of any that stole his winding sheet, or fought for his coffin, or went to law for his grave.” And when you are thus near eternity, and going to wear that last suit—a shroud, in that last earthly abode—a grave, how insignificant will those things appear, that now, perhaps, divide your affections from those you should love as fellow-travellers to the world of peace.

But, perhaps, some have wronged you greatly, who are utter strangers to the grace of God. Surely you should rather view them with pity, than with anger. Oh, think of their deplorable estate ! They have souls immortal as your own ; but these are perishing in sin. The blood of Jesus has washed none of their stains away. No hope for eternity is theirs. Your hope blooms with immortality ; but darkness and despair are their probable future portion. They are the enemies of God ; and all before them, in the endless world, is weeping, and lamentation, and woe. How pitiable a condition ! Should you not rather pray for them, than indulge resentment against poor fellow-creatures, in so miserable a state ! surely they have long enough to mourn. If they will seek nothing higher, let them enjoy their short-lived triumph. It is all they ever can enjoy. Repine not at their prosperity, when it is all confined to a few moments, and they have to mourn and weep for ever.

CHAPTER XVII.

THE SPIRITUAL CONFLICTS AND SORROWS OF THE DISCIPLES OF CHRIST.

1. **THE** Christian's path to heaven is a chequered path. Many are the sacred pleasures of the followers of the Lamb; but they have also pains and trials peculiar to themselves.

"Much in sorrow, much in woe,
"Onward, Christians, onward go!
"Fight the fight, and, worn with strife,
"Sleep with tears the bread of life.
"Onward, Christians, onward go!
"Join the war, and face the foe."

Every disciple of Jesus will find that the Christian life is *not* a warfare. Would you behold those who have no foes without, no foe within; whom no fears distract, no dangers threaten; you may, but it must be when you join them in upper world; and if you ever join them there, assisted above, you must persevere in the warfare, which they triumphantly ended.

Perhaps you reply, Is it not said, that The ways of men are ways of pleasantness; and that all her paths are straight? It is so: yet the Christian's happiness in this world is not perfect happiness. There is true pleasure in the warfare; more pleasure in the Christian's tears of penitence and sorrow, than in the loud laughter of the world; yet

"Life is the scene of conflict, not of rest;
"Man's is laborious happiness at best;
"On this side death his dangers never cease,
"His joys are joys of conquest, not of peace."

§ 2. The spiritual sorrows and conflicts, which the Christian has to endure, are of various kinds.

Many of the Christian's trials proceed from the weakness of the flesh. The statement made in the text feels the correctness of the statement made in the text. "The flesh lusteth against the spirit, and the spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary the one to the other, so that ye do not the things which ye would."

ession, the flesh, in the Scriptures, appears frequently to be eant human corruption, or those remains of this depravity, ith which the believer has to struggle, and which, perhaps, ive their seat in the flesh. This is one of the Christian's incipal enemies. The world occasionally allures by its arms, or alarms by its terrors. The assaults of Satan take ace at times, but are not constantly continued ; but the flesh like a body of death, with which the Christian is perpetually burthened. The Scriptures represent the conquest and struction of this constant enemy, as a painful and difficult hievement. It is not described as dying by a sudden ound, but by a slow and lingering death. "They that are rist's have crucified the flesh with its affections and lusts." ucifixion was a lingering and tormenting death. The sufferer passed through many hours of agony. The young hristian commencing his course, full of joy and hope, may r a while be comparatively insensible to the presence of this onstant enemy ; but soon he will find that he has to struggle ith an evil heart, and has need to crucify the flesh with its ffections and desires.

§ 3. In every nation, in every age, this has been the ex-rience of the followers of the Lamb. The eminent martyr, radford, on one occasion observed, "O Lord! sometimes ethinks I feel it so with me, as if there were no difference etween my heart and the wicked. I have as blind a ind as they ; as stout, stubborn, rebellious, and hard eart as they." Henry Martyn, so distinguished for piety, rote in his journal, "What a dark atheistical state do I live. ! Alas, that this creation should so engross my mind, and e Author of it be so slightly and coldly regarded ! Amazing atience ! he bears with this faithless, foolish heart !" Yet he ho uttered these complaints, when breathing forth the pious elings of his soul, could say, "Let me praise God, for hav- g turned me from a life of woe to the enjoyment of peace nd hope. The work is real. I can no more doubt it than can doubt my existence ; the whole current of my desires is ltered—I am walking quite another way, though I am incessantly stumbling in that way—I had a most blessed view f God and divine things. I looked forward to complete onformity to him, as the great end of my existence, and my ssurance was full—I said, almost with tears, 'Who shall se-

missionary, referring to negro converts, wrote, "I delighted to hear about twenty of them give a affecting account of the state of their minds. They labour under trials from without and from within—own country-people, and from the temptations of the struggles of a depraved heart. They speak of their good and their bad hearts, the one opposing so that they cannot do the things that they would, said, "Trouble too much live in my heart. Me I ner. Me no see, me no feel, till God open my heart. Me heart trouble me too much. Me think me hearts; one good, one bad. Good heart tell me heart tell me no pray. I try pray God—my bad ble me: he speak: he say, 'No pray: go work.

"Another said to him, 'Wicked thing trouble much. Me want to do good, but me wicked heart me. Me heart run away all this week—run all 'Suppose me pray, my heart run to my country Leone—all about. Sometimes them things me no member come in my heart; and then me can't see but Jesus Christ have mercy upon me, poor thing me no love Jesus Christ yet. Me want to love him too much: but me bad heart! Me think

each is recorded as the simple and expressive language of illiterate disciples of the Saviour.

4. Perhaps the feelings of your heart have often resembled *Ps.* Have you not been cast down, and perhaps tempted to despair, because of the corruption which you felt within? What has been the cause of your sorrow?

Perhaps you mourn an evil heart of unbelief. The graces that exist in your soul, are so opposed and weakened by powerful corruptions, that they seem like light struggling with darkness. In some happy moments you think you *do* trust in *will* trust the Saviour with your all; but these moments soon depart, and you feel as if you had no trust in him. Sometimes you are ready to conclude, that you do indeed believe on the Saviour of the lost; but soon you feel faith so weak, hope so dull, love so cold, that you doubt whether you possess any faith, or hope, or love. You are ready to exclaim, Can it be that such a cold dull creature as I am, believes the Lord Jesus Christ? Can this be the faith to which so much is promised? Do I indeed believe that Jesus died for me, and yet love him no more? Do I indeed believe that sin is so mischievous, and hate it so little? Do I believe that heaven is so desirable? why then these cold affections? these unguided desires? And do I believe that God will order all things for good? whence then my fears? whence my rebellious will? Surely I cannot be a believer: if I am, Lord, help my unbelief!

You must not infer that you have no faith, because faith is weak, or because you feel within you an evil heart of unbelief. What servant of God, whose piety his word records, has not at some times felt the same? Jacob said, "All these things are against me."^a Job wished he had never been born.^b Joseph repined at the prosperity of the ungodly, and was tempted to think a pious life vain.^c David expressed fear that God had cast him off for ever.^d Peter when ordered by his Lord to walk upon the water, through want of faith began to sink. "O thou," said his Lord, "of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt?"^e Often had the Saviour to reprove his apostles for their unbelief. They had to pray, "Lord, increase our faith;" and he represented what they had as hardly equal to a grain

(a) Gen. xlii. 36.

(b) Ps. lxxvii.

(c) Job iii. 1.

(d) Ps. lxxiii.

(e) Matt. xiv. 31.

of mustard seed.^f If such was the wear even in the hearts of apostles, when they felt them, be not cast down in despondency, and do not complain. It is unspeakably desirable for you to get into full assurance; yet there may be a fullness of faith in a heart, that feels many of the struggles, and that clings to the Saviour with a trembling hand.

Notwithstanding the struggles of unbelief, there is much faith as leads you to give up earthly things, and is genuine; for "This is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith."^g

Though you may keep your hold on the Saviour with a trembling hand; though you may feel a weakness and valence of unbelief; yet if you have such a love for Christ precious to you; as leads you to walk in his ways, and to count all things but loss for Christ, in his word, in plain and unequivocal language, to be saving. "To you that believe in Christ, he is precious to you, it is plain you believe that we have passed from death unto life, O brethren."^h "Ye are my friends, if ye do the will of my Father which is in heaven, I will demand you."ⁱ "Verily I say unto you, I will not leave you orphans, I have left house, or parents, or brethren, for the kingdom of God's sake, who shall leave all, and follow me, I will fold more in this present time, and in the time to come, and everlasting life."^j

Nor must you suppose that the Saviour will leave you, because you feel the painful struggle of unbelief. When the poor man came for relief for his child, exclaimed, "Lord, I believe, but I am overcome with unbelief;"^k did Jesus refuse his aid, and leave him in unbelief; then come to me, and I will give you such conduct from his compassionate heart, as will answer the supplicant's prayer, and give him faith, by giving him his request. He is "to-day, and for ever."^l Wait then at the foot of the cross, O my friend, and be blessed. A time will come when unbelief will be one of its struggles be felt in the happy ages.

(f) Luke xvii. 5, 6.

(g) 1 John iii. 14.

(h) Mark ix. 24.

(i) 1 John v. 4.

(j) John xv. 14.


§ 5. Perhaps your soul sinks within you on the review of former years. Conscience accuses you with thousands of crimes, and brings to remembrance mercies abused, sabbaths broken, sins committed without concern, iniquity drank in like water, and many long rebellious years employed in rebellion against God. Now you think, Can all these crimes be forgiven? Can one, who was so long and so zealously employed in the service of hell, ever reach heaven? Can one so sinful, so impure, as I have been, ever find admission to that holy world, where nothing that defileth can enter?

Perhaps your discouragement springs, not so much from what you were, as from what you are. You feel that every grace you have is so weak; that so many imperfections and defects adhere to you; you find in yourself much backwardness to good, much proneness to evil; you lament wandering affections and sinful inclinations. You are ready to exclaim, I am like no one else; no heart is so hard as mine. I can neither repent, nor believe, nor love, nor obey as I ought. I am nothing but unworthiness.

Do some or all these things sink you in depression? Then consider for what did Jesus come. Was it not to save *the lost*? Can you be more lost than utterly lost? yet such are those he came to seek and save, and such were many that have felt his saving power. See in David a murderer pardoned; in Paul, a persecutor and blasphemer forgiven and saved. See from the Corinthian church many admitted to heaven, that once were extortioners, and drunkards, and fornicators, and adulterers, and idolaters, and even guilty of nameless abominations. But when the Spirit brought them to repentance, the blood of Jesus blotted out all their atrocious crimes, and it could be said to them, "Ye are washed, ye are sanctified, ye are justified by the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God." You are not to seek comfort from the hope, that your crimes have been small; but from reposing your hope on Him whose blood cleanses from all sin. Did the servant, who sought mercy when he owed ten thousand talents, meet a refusal because the debt was so great? Did the creditor forgive the debtor, who owed fifty pence, but refuse to forgive him, who owed five hundred? Did he not forgive one as well as the other? and he that had most forgiven loved the most.

"But I am so unworthy." It is true, you are; and better you know yourself, the deeper will be this impression. Not one of your actions ever was holy enough to stand the investigation of God's pure and searching eye. What worthiness can be expected in a criminal, condemned deserver to die? How much less can worthiness be expected in a man, the wages of whose sin was death, eternal death!—The worthiness of good in such a case is impossible. They that are worthy of hell, can be worthy of nothing besides. They that have deserved, and all, have deserved; but the *gift* of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ. If accepted by God, you will be accepted in him, the Beloved. If eternal life is your portion, you must receive it, and enjoy it, as the gift of God.

Allow me to inquire, Does not discouragement or despondency savour of a legal spirit? Is not there still in your heart a leaning to a righteousness of your own? If you seek forgiveness as an act of grace, and salvation as a blessing given to a poor condemned, hell-deserving sinner, why do you fear? They seem to flow from a self-righteous bias, which would encourage you to hope at least a little from your own worthiness possessed, or some freedom from grosser sins; and because you do not feel that worthiness, and remember those crimes, therefore this ground of your hope is shaken. Look to Jesus, as altogether ruined in yourself, and expect your all in him, and then you need not fear.



the effect of a divine hand. God sometimes displays his power in tempests and tornadoes but oftener in the gentle breakings of the day. God does not work in all alike. John, and James, and Peter, and Matthew hearkened to a gentle call, and followed Christ. No terrors alarmed them; and probably the change effected by divine grace in their hearts, was as gentle as the opening of a summer's morning. But Paul, overwhelmed with terrors, was struck speechless to the earth; and the gaoler felt probably as great a commotion in his breast, as the earthquake which shook the foundations of the prison. Repentance must be known not by the strength of its pangs, but by the fruits it produces. The most tormenting pangs of sorrow are not true repentance, if they do not inspire the soul with hatred of sin, and urge it to Jesus for peace and salvation. If your repentance has been so deep as to fill you with hatred of sin; as to lead you to forsake, and watch, and pray against sin in all its forms; and as to urge you to flee to the Lord Jesus, and to accept him as your Saviour, your Lord, and your all, it is genuine, it is saving. Do not therefore imagine that others have no grace, whose experience has not been a copy of yours; nor suppose that you have none, because yours does not exactly resemble theirs. If you trust in the same blood, if you love the same Saviour, if you walk in the same path, serve the same God, and seek the same heaven, depend upon it you have felt the influence of the same Spirit; and though the operation has differed, the effect is the same. If you saw a valley, like that seen in vision by Ezekiel, covered with the dead, but among the lifeless multitudes a few possessed of life and vigour; part of which had been raised suddenly from death, and the other part so gradually, that none could tell when the vital spark was infused, would it be argued, that these were not alive, because they had risen so imperceptibly into life? or would it be reasonable for any of these to doubt their possession of the life they felt, because they could not trace its first motions on their frame? You live in a dead world; and if you feel a spiritual life begun, be thankful and rejoice in your God, though you should be unable to tell the time when he breathed into you the breath of life. To know that you live is unspeakably momentous; but to know when that life began, is of much less moment.



comfort comes into my soul. I seek the rest I but feel none of the delight and tranquillity that I and expected to find.

Perhaps, in mercy, God for a time withholds I or the sensible enjoyment of the blessings, you persevere, and you will obtain them. The woman that pleaded for her daughter, seemed to meet a even the compassionate Jesus. Again she asked seemed to deny; but it was to exercise her faith strength and power appear. God long waited, refused to listen; why should you be surprised, expect you to persevere in imploring blessings, before feel that you possess them?

Consider too, that they who have true desires have so much grace as to be blessed. The Lord says are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness they shall be filled." They who hunger and thirst for good, feel their want, and experience earnest and pure desire; a desire that never can be satisfied, but waits for blessing. Give to him that is tormented with thirst, a heap of gold or jewels; this would not satisfy him. If your desires after spiritual good are restless desires, that the possession of a world will

the Saviour with grateful delight, and could say, He loved me, and gave himself for me; but now your joy is changed for mourning; your day for night; your light for darkness; your peace and tranquillity for doubt and fear. You fear that God has withdrawn from you, and say, "O that I were as in months past, as in the days when God preserved me; when his candle shined upon my head, and when by his light I walked through darkness." Now, instead of possessing cheering comforts, you walk in darkness and have no light. Your heaven is clothed with blackness. The light of God's countenance is withdrawn, and he hides his face from you. You fear that you have been a self-deceiver. You walk in darkness, and your prospects for eternity are full of uncertainty; you know not whither you are travelling, to heaven or hell; you are full of fearful apprehensions; and all that should fill your soul with comfort, only tends to increase your sorrows.

Painful as is this condition, all its pains and sorrows have been felt by many, who now rest in heaven. Many a child of light has walked in darkness; many an heir of heaven encountered doubts, and fears, and terrors by the way. The word of God represents those who are the heirs of "an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, reserved in heaven for" them, as "for a season, if need be, in heaviness through manifold temptations;"^(o) and directs his children how to act in circumstances so painful. "Who is among you that feareth the Lord, that obeyeth the voice of his servant, that walketh in darkness, and hath no light? let him trust in the name of the Lord, and stay upon his God."^(p)

If thus overwhelmed with spiritual distress, devoutly inquire, whence proceeds your sorrow? Why has God withdrawn his presence from you? Why does he permit you to walk in darkness? Perhaps the cause lies in yourself. You have perhaps yielded to some temptation, or indulged in some besetting sin. Hence flows your want of peace, your dread of God. Your own conscience condemns you. An uneasy conscience has perhaps kept you from the throne of grace. If it be so, be assured that God is dealing in mercy with you, to deprive you of spiritual peace. You cannot expect that God should become the minister of sin, and encourage you in it, by favouring you as much with spiritual comforts, when

(o) 1 Pet. i. 4-6.

(p) Isa. l. 10.

you sin against him, as when you watch, and pray, and v humbly with him. If this is the source of your happiness never expect peace till the sin which brings your sorrow is forsaken. Would you enjoy that blessing, flee from sin; exercise renewed repentance; apply to the blood sprinkling; and walk humbly and holily with your God.

Perhaps if you have not been indulging in what is essentially sinful, you have given way to a light and talkless spirit; have indulged in levity inconsistent with profession, or in trifling unworthy of an heir of heaven is a frequent cause of spiritual distress.

There are, however, many reasons, for which God suffers his children for a time to walk in darkness, even when they have not been indulging in sin or levity.

§ 9. Perhaps God designs to deepen your humility and fulness to God rises highest in the happy days of joy; but humility is often strengthened most in the days of spiritual distress. Then when the Christian sees his unworthiness clinging to all he is, and all he does, he discerns such a world of iniquity in his heart, that he is surprised and alarms his soul; then it is that he descends to the depths of self-abasement, and feels that salvation is at hand. Perhaps you need to sink there, to strip you of your pride, or to wean you from all self-dependence, and to feel your utter helplessness, wretchedness, and nothing of this the Christian learns when he is converted, and enters the way of religion by receiving this important lesson is often taught him more in the dark day of spiritual sorrow, than it was in his early penitence.

Or perhaps, by leaving you for a while designs to teach you more of the Saviour's work, and to bind the gospel closer to your heart. You felt so much sorrow for sin as led you to feel not felt enough of the worth of Christ; the remembrance of former sins distresses you in your own heart an extent of iniquity but now you can say, with feelings hitherto unknown, I am the chief of sinners, but Jesus died for me, and intends to teach you to prize your mercy more. Light is most sweet when it comes after darkness.

when rising from the bed of pain; liberty, when es-
 from confinement; and summer, after a long and
 winter: so the soul learns to prize the presence of God,
 for a time denied that joy. A young disciple of
 who had lost much of her comfort by giving way to
 and trifling spirit, lately observed to the writer, that if
 she could again attain what she once enjoyed, and which she
 thought she should never lose, she would not part with it
 for ten thousand worlds. Perhaps you have not valued
 mercies enough; seek them again, and when obtained,
 treasure them more; and press onward to that happy world,
 no cloud will ever rise, no drooping winter be felt in
 it; but God's presence will be enjoyed through one
 day.

Perhaps God permits you to walk in darkness, that he may
 cleanse and brighten your graces. Faith and love are exer-
 cised most in the dark and cloudy day of sorrow. To believe
 all is pleasing, when peace smiles on the soul, and
 its path bestrews its way, is an easy thing; but to believe
 all is dark and dreary, when no comfort is felt within,
 no light is seen without—this is the faith that God values.
 To love when the soul feels the assurance of God's love,
 the joys that love imparts, is easy; but to love when his
 presence is withdrawn, when doubts and fears infest the soul,
 hope is languishing, and comforts apparently dead—this
 is of a stronger, nobler kind. God doubtless often ex-
 ercises his children with spiritual trials, to call faith and love
 into much exercise. Thus they who are in heaviness through
 old temptations, are said to be so, "That the trial of their
 faith might be found unto praise, and honour, and glory, at
 the appearing of Jesus Christ."^s

Do not be therefore dismayed, if comfort seems for a
 while withdrawn from you. If the cause lies obviously in
 sin, lukewarmness, or negligence, seek grace to correct
 it; if you cannot find it there, then think what may be
 the intention of the Most High, in thus trying you, and pray
 that his design may be fully accomplished.

The dealings of God in the dispensations of his grace, often
 resemble those in the world of nature. Look at a harvest
 field. Behold the waving crop ready for the garner. Yet think

(s) 1 Pet. i. 7. Job xiii. 15. Hab. iii. 17. 18.

They have corruptions to be killed, and they want frost ; they have graces to be matured, and they want summer sun. If all were health, they might forget of life ; if all were sickness, be unfitted for its busi- were spiritual joy, they might be happy, but not If all were light, they might be zealous ; but w faith find occasion for its exercise ? and how woul look into the dark recesses of their own hearts ? spiritual sorrow, they might sink beneath the withe of despondency. But God, their gracious God, every one the needful share of health and sickne pain. Gives spiritual peace, that they may run in his commandments ; or withdraws his presence, them in darkness, that he may lay them low at l correct them for their sins ; or kill their corruptio ercise their graces ; and he does all things well.

§ 11. Perhaps you imagine that your want comfort argues that you are destitute of divine that you have always been a deceiver. Indeed watch against self-deception ; and such fears shou serious self-examination : but if after such exami find no real reason for indulging such fears, reje the suggestions of the wicked one, designed to har-

such sorrows; and if you were as dead to God now, as you were then, you would have no such sorrows now. Do you not feel as much concern to walk with God, as you did when your sun shone brightest? is not sin as odious? is not Christ as precious? Think not then that you have no grace, because you for a while may have no comfort. Were you to see a dutiful child, that was always concerned to do his father's will, and fearful of displeasing him, lamenting bitterly that he did not love his father more, and desiring, above all earthly good, a stronger affection for his parent; would you not argue, that child loves his father, though he now hardly believes it; If he had no love, he would feel no such sorrows, and cherish no such desires. You may apply similar reasoning to your own case, or that of any child of God, who walks in darkness, but who walks with God.

An aged Christian in much distress of mind, was once complaining to a friend of his miserable condition; and among other things said, "That which troubles me most is, that God will be dishonoured by my fall." His friend hastily catching at this expression, used it for the purpose of comforting him: "Art thou careful of the honour of God? and dost thou think God hath no care of thee, and of thy salvation? A soul forsaken of God, cares not what becomes of the honour of God. Therefore be of good cheer: if God's heart were not towards thee, thine would not be towards God, or towards the remembrance of his name."

§ 12. Perhaps with some or all of these inward conflicts and sorrows, you have to encounter outward opposition. The world reviles and slanders you, because you are no longer conformed to its corruptions. You are perhaps represented as a schismatic, an enthusiast, or a fanatic; or as a melancholy creature, going out of your senses, because you will follow the dictates of Jesus, and tread where he trod before you. Your regard to his precepts is deemed unnecessary preciseness; your religion is pronounced hypocrisy; and your wisdom folly. Your former associates make you the butt of their ridicule. Your nearest relatives oppose your holy choice; and are changed into enemies because you have embraced the gospel of Jesus. *Perhaps some who read these lines, may have parents who even threaten to disown them, and to cast them helpless on the wide world, if they adhere to their religion*

factions of human life, acquiescing in the gross rather than the hated thing of Christian should their doors. The husband, now cured of all jealousy by his wife's conversion to Christianity, her new modesty out of doors together, choo with an adulteress, sooner than a Christian : the der of the undutiful son in his Gentile state, d now when he becomes obedient by becoming the master, heretofore so good to his unfaith cards him now upon his fidelity and his religion husband had rather have his wife false, the fa rebel, the master his servant a rogue, than (good : so much is the hatred of our name, advantages of virtue flowing from it. Our hea and his heavenly religion, are both unknown, demned, without any other consideration, but tl name of Christian." Only change the word Dissenter, or Methodist, and Tertullian's word: description of the spirit of many opposers of ge in the present age.

In the midst of trials of this kind, you have rather than sorrow. They are what the holy first disciples to expect. "Ye shall be hated o

household." If they represented him as a glutton, a drunkard, and a stirrer of sedition, surely you need not be surprised, I should not be pained, at any scandals they may cast on him! If friends oppose your choice, and deem your wisdom faulty, remember his brethren at one time did not believe in him; but said, he was beside himself. If the haters of holiness revile, and mock, and injure you, hearken while your Lord says, "If the world hate you, ye know that it hated me before it hated you. If ye were of the world, the world would love his own: but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you."^u Since he was hated, why should it grieve you to be hated by a world that hated him? Why should you mourn at being reviled, when he was reviled before you? Rather rejoice; and if ever disposed to mourn and droop on account of the opposition you experience, then hear him saying, "Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake; for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are ye when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake. Rejoice, and be exceeding glad; for great is your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you."^v

Thus expect little from the world that hated him; but rejoice that if you are dead with him, you shall also live with him; if you suffer, you shall also reign with him; if you confess him on earth, he will also confess you before his Father, and before his angels." Important period! How trifling then will appear the ridicule of the gay, and the more open enmity of the hostile! Then all the trials of faithful piety will end. Look therefore to the crown, and you will not tremble at the cross. Think of hearing, at the end of life's short day, those laddening words, "Well done, good and faithful servant!" and the enmity and contempt of the haters of religion will be as trifling as the chatterings of a magpie; and will no more prevent your pressing on to heaven, than the buzzings of an angry fly.

§ 13. Had the disciples of Jesus no other enemies than the flesh and the world, to oppose their progress to heaven, the Christian life would be in reality a warfare. But the word of

^u) John xv. 18, 19.


^v) Matt. v. 10—12.

^w) 2 Tim. ii. 12. Matt. x. 32.

God discloses to your view other enemies not able.

However Unitarians and infidels may reject the notion of Satanic opposition, directed against the piety, no truth is revealed in the divine word without it. Satan is there described as an active, a powerful enemy ; “ As a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour.”* This language does not represent him as timid, a supine or careless, foe ; but as a man ready to attack the strongest ; a watchful enemy who sleeps, not sleeping. The Christian is declared to maintain a conflict with this enemy, and with his in guilt and ruin. “ Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. We wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places. How awful is this statement ! The angels that kept their first estate, are the rulers of this dark world. Over them they reign with an undisputed sway, and exert all their power to harass and to injure those who are translated into the dark kingdom. The followers of Jesus, in this world, have to encounter their opposition, and to overcome them.

§ 14. The great end which Satan and his gr




a wicked spirit, that has been labouring to delude mankind for almost six thousand years, must be innumerable. How skilled in deception are some men, even in a few years! how much more skilled must the father of lies have become in six thousand! Hence the Christian has particular need to watch against the wiles of the devil; for these are doubtless adapted to the age, situation, and circumstances of those whom he assaults. Sometimes the temptations offered by Satan are sudden and violent; at others sly and insinuating. Under his influence, or that of corrupt nature, all the most precious truths of the Bible are perverted into means for hardening men in their carelessness and guilt.

Are persons brought out of a state of carelessness and presumption, other devices are then employed. They are tempted to think that it is too late for them to seek for mercy; that their sins are too many and great to be forgiven; that their doom is fixed, and that it is vain for them to seek for happiness. If these views are not sufficient to prevent their following after salvation, it is then perhaps suggested to them, that they have sinned the unpardonable sin, and, therefore, that there can be no hope for them; or they are tempted to build on some other foundation, instead of that which God has laid. Their minds are harassed and tempted to indulge in unbelief. In prayer a variety of suggestions are powerfully injected into the mind, till, distracted and perplexed, the Christian can scarcely pray: then he is tempted to think, that he had better not pray at all, than pray so imperfectly; and if he listens to the tempter, Satan gains an advantage over him.

Is the temptation designed to draw the believer into sin. The sin is dressed out in its most alluring colours. The advantages, enjoyments, and pleasures to be obtained by compliance are all arrayed before him. The bait is presented, but the hook is hidden. It is perhaps suggested that the sin is a small one, and may afterwards be repented of; or that many pious persons have fallen into worse crimes: as Noah, David, and Peter, who yet found forgiveness and happiness. Or perhaps the soul is tempted by the suggestion, that it would not actually transgress the divine laws; that so much strictness, as some professors of religion plead for, is unnecessary preciseness; and thus it is rendered bold in venturing on temptation, and the next step is transgression. Then from sin i

is led on to sin ; from smaller to greater crimes, till peace, and hope, and faith, and happiness are all sacrificed. Thus Peter fell : he first was tempted to a lie ; to this another lie was soon added ; and many hours had not elapsed, before perjury and profaneness were added to the falsehoods previously uttered. So David first indulged unlawful desires for Bathsheba ; then sunk into adultery ; and to shield her and himself from the shame of discovery, proceeded, by the sword of the enemy, to murder the man he had so deeply injured. Had Peter at first been tempted to curse, and to swear, or David to murder Uriah, that he might gain Bathsheba, probably the tempter's design had been frustrated ; but step by step they were drawn to the precipice, from which they fell. There is no device of the devil, which the Christian should fear more, than that of being rendered bold in venturing on temptation, and giving way to what may be thought smaller sins.

The size of this volume will not allow an enumeration of the devices of the wicked one. It may however be said, Watch against them ; and whenever any thing, however plausible or promising, would diminish your love to Christ, or your hatred of sin ; or would render your conscience less tender, or your conduct less strict, suspect it as one of the wiles of the devil. Whenever any thing, however fair and alluring, would draw you to the edge of temptation, or lead



no occasion for surprise or alarm at the strength, the repetition, or the horrid nature of his suggestions or temptations. Read the history of your Lord's temptation, and it may furnish you many useful lessons. Satan tempted Jesus—hence you learn that the most pious may expect his assaults. He *persevered* in tempting Jesus, and when foiled at one temptation employed another. Hence it is evident, that Satan will not easily depart from those whose faith and piety he is anxious to destroy. He tempted Jesus with the most horrid of temptations, even that of falling down and worshipping himself—a devil. Need the Christian then be surprised, if the enemy, who presented a temptation so horrid to his Lord, should harass him with suggestions equally dreadful? His last and principal offer to the Saviour, was the world—"All this will I give thee, if thou wilt fall down and worship me." This is the most successful of the false, but alluring, offers, that he still employs to keep or draw the soul from God. When tempting Jesus, he backed his impious suggestions by passages from even the word of God, and by wresting the Scriptures. Thus the kingdom of Satan is still upheld, and multitudes undone for ever. Yet consider, that Jesus, though tempted even to worship the devil, continued holy, harmless, and undefiled. It is not therefore temptation, but yielding to temptation, that stains the soul with sin. Often are the friends of Jesus distressed and perplexed, from not regarding this distinction. They think they cannot be his followers, who have such horrid thoughts or temptations as they have. At such times they should look to their Lord, and think, Am I, or can I be, tempted worse than he? Why then despond?

That you may overcome in your warfare, watchfulness is a most momentous Christian duty. The Lord Jesus Christ inculcates a watchful spirit. "Take ye heed, watch and pray; for ye know not when the time is.—I say unto all, Watch." "Blessed is he that watcheth." "Let him that thinketh he standeth, take heed lest he fall."

Take unto you the whole armour of God, and you will, through Jesus's strength, triumph over the wicked one. Jesus persevered and triumphed, and angels came and ministered unto him. Follow him, and he will minister to your wants;

(f) Mark xiii. 33, 35—37.

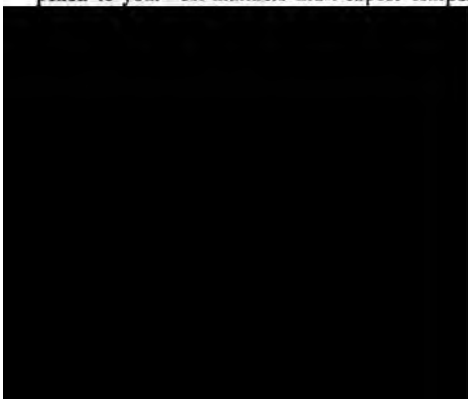
(g) Rev. xvi. 15.

(h) 1 Cor. x. 12.

and when the last temptation is over, angels will minister to your triumphant spirit; and bear you happy conqueror to worlds of light.

Pray much. By prayer you will conquer. Angels will minister to your triumphant spirit; and bear you happy conqueror to worlds of light. The slothful are peculiarly open to the assaults of the wicked one. With prayer, unite reading the Scriptures and meditation. Above all, endeavour to live under the influence of faith in God and Christ in heaven. To commiserate trials and temptations to Christian friends, may aid in overcoming the wicked one. An excellent preacher mentions a man, who was tempted to blasphemy for a term of twenty years, and kept in almost constant conflict. He thought there was no man so vile, and with such thoughts as he; and that if the world knew what he should be abhorred as a monster. He was once tempted to suicide, principally on the ground, that it was a blasphemy as he supposed himself, should long have been hearing the subject of these dreadful suggestions upon, and afterwards conversing privately respecting it, he was happily delivered from his sorrows. Be patient and persevere.

§ 16. When in your pilgrimage to heaven, you must maintain a painful conflict with the world, or the flesh, or the wicked one, think not that some strange thing has happened to you. As mariners must expect tempests,



ness, he had said, "I feel a hell in my own conscience. Oh, my heart is miserable! oh, miserable and woful! The burthen of my sin lieth so heavy upon me, I doubt it will break my heart!" When asked if he would pray, he replied, "I cannot." They requested him to permit them to pray for him; but he replied, "Take not the name of God in vain, by praying for a reprobate." Thus dark was the night; but when its shades dispersed, as bright was the day.

Of another, who was a martyr, it is recorded, that through five successive years, such intolerable grief of mind oppressed him, that life had no comfort left. He only partook of food to keep himself a little longer out of hell; thinking that he must sink there as soon as life should close. Yet at length he found deliverance from his burthen, and lived a life of eminent piety, dead to the world, and ripening for heaven.

Brainerd, so distinguished for his sufferings, labours, and success as a missionary to the American Indians, often felt deep depression. In some of these seasons of spiritual darkness he wrote: "My spiritual conflicts were unspeakably dreadful, heavier than the mountains and overflowing floods! I seemed enclosed in hell itself; I was deprived of all sense of God, even of his being; and that was my misery. My soul was in such anguish I could not eat. I appeared to myself a creature fit for nothing, neither heaven nor earth. I thought I was the meanest, vilest, most helpless, ignorant creature living. And yet I knew what God had done for my soul; though sometimes I was assaulted with doubts, whether it was possible for such a wretch as I to be in a state of grace."

Many others equally pious, have encountered equal spiritual distress. Even the holy Jesus, in a dark and dreadful hour, exclaimed, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me!" Think not, then, that because comfort has vanished, salvation is lost; or that the victory is doubtful, because the conflict is severe. Cleave to your Saviour, and the sun, that clouds have hidden, will shine forth again. Again the presence of God will cheer you, and the prospect of glory animate your soul.

§ 17. Amidst all the discouragement and distress of your spiritual warfare, never forget that you have a faithful "High Priest, who is passed into the heavens;" but who knows "how to succour them that are tempted," as "he was in a"

points tempted like as" they are, "yet felt the sting of affliction, the assaults of rows of spiritual desertion. In your day approach him and say, Blessed Lord, I that once was thine—harassed by those harassed thee; but thou hast conquered give thy poor follower grace and strength.

Why distrust the gracious Saviour? as rich as heavenly love can make them truth can fix them? as free as an undo Art thou his servant? he says, "Where my servant be."^k Art thou one of his "My sheep shall never perish, neither shall man nor devil) pluck them out of my hand laden with sin, and full of fears? he says to me I will in no wise cast out."^m "O that labour and are heavy laden, and I It is said, that when bishop Butler lay said to his chaplain, "Though I have sinned, and please God, to the utmost of my consciousness of perpetual infirmities, I am—" "My lord," said the chaplain, "you Jesus Christ is a Saviour."—"True," would how shall I know that he is a Saviour written, *Him that cometh to me I will*

your Father, to my God and your God." Precious declaration !

With such a Father as the blessed God, why should his penitent, though unworthy, child despond and fear ? Richer mercy you cannot need, than that which God displays. Promises more free you cannot desire. Though one sin allowed to reign would undo an immortal soul, yet had a soul which comes to God by Christ, sins as numerous as the drops of morning dew, the blood of Jesus would wash them all away. Cannot you trust in God to help you ? He bade the sun shine ; has he not power to shine into your sad heart ? Does he want the inclination ? It cannot be, that he who gave Christ for you, can be unwilling with Christ to give whatever your wants require.—Jesus has died. Such has been his infinite pity, that through his appointment Jesus has died. O, comprehend but this aright, and nothing more will be needed to banish thy fears, to raise thy hopes, to subdue thy unbelief, to fire and to fill thee with trust and delight in thy great, and good, and gracious God. Think of him as a Father. Does not a father pity his feeble child ? If the child lie sick and afflicted, unable to utter any thing but sobs and groans, will he pity that child the less ? God is a Father to those that seek him ; a kinder Father than any earthly parent : he knows his children's sorrows ; he sees their feebleness, and knows their frame is dust. He pities them, and hast thou been led to seek him, then be assured he pities thee.

§ 19. To animate you in pressing forward to the Christian crown, often think of those, who through faith and patience, are inheriting the promises. Turn to the first ages of Christianity. Christians then esteemed it an honour to suffer shame for the name of Jesus. They forced their passage to heaven, through all that is most dreadful ; and sought admission there, at the expense of all that is most dear. Riches, health, ease, pleasure, and life, all were trifles in their esteem. Then tormentors were weary of inflicting pain, before martyrs were weary of bearing it. Their path was no smooth and flowery way : sorrows beset its entrance, and attended its course ; and flames and tortures were at its end : and yet they trod it. *These indeed seem like a different race of beings, like creatures of a different world. Ah, my friend ! there lay the distinction between them and many that profess the same*

go so far back to view the patience of the saints. hind you a hundred and fifty or two hundred ye ENGLISH confessors, of whom the world was n encountering persecution in their native isle, or : famine in the midst of American wilds. See dun with their captives, and deserts peopled with their persecutors hunting out their little haunts; denyin enjoyment of religious worship, even in solitar lonely woods. Behold soldiers entering their disturbing their meetings; silencing their min dragging hearers, and preachers, to fines, confis prisons. O be not slothful! though not called to their sorrows, imitate their lives; cherish their ferment to the absent Saviour; and their fond eag better world. When the world tempts you, and gests, Your hope is vain; then think of them wt all these trials, and many more; but who overca the blood of the Lamb.

§ 20. When tempted to despond, or shrink in conflict, then hear your Lord saying, Will you you for whom I died; to whom I have been a st friend: who have professed so much love to me taken on your soul such solemn vows, and seal

“and I will not go away. Though the tempter’s suggestions were true, that my hope is vain, yet if I perish, at thy will I die!”

If tempted to give religion up, hear your Lord saying, “Hold that fast which thou hast, that no one take thy crown.” The enemies thou hast been instructed to watch against, will try to rob thee of that prize; but hold the beginning of thy confidence fast unto the end. Think of the worth of that crown of which they would rob thee. Think of the price which was paid, that that crown might adorn thy head, thou child of dust!—a price no less precious than the blood of the Lamb. Think of the love that would bestow it on thee! Think of the raptures of receiving, and of the heaven of enjoying, that thornless crown! Whatever thou mayst lose, or suffer, or fear, or dread, still hold this fast! Though it does not yet beam around thy honoured head, yet follow Jesus, and it shortly will. Hear him speaking to thee: “Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life.” No meaner hand than mine shall give the glorious boon. Thy Lord’s own hand will bestow the prize.—Fear not that thou shouldst not attain the blessing, for I will give it thee.

Be faithful unto death. This is all, and come when death may, then this crown, not of merit but of grace, is thine. This promise was given to those who had to pass through persecution. You are not called to such trials; be faithful when encountering far lighter opposition; and remember that the spirit of martyrs should animate every Christian. If you are afraid of being singularly pious; if you fear a sneer, or a laugh, or the words fanatic, enthusiast, or methodist; if you shrink from your duty for fear of offending a friend, or an employer, can you think that such faith and fortitude would stand a much severer trial? Can you think that you should be faithful unto death, amidst taunts, and torments; if this be the case, are you faithful now? Does not Jesus say, Whosoever shall be ashamed of me and of my words, of him will the Son of man be ashamed? O watch against a cowardly spirit in religion!

It is true our difficulties are not like those of some who have preceded us. They are less formidable; and perhaps

on that account more dangerous. When enemies they encountered, there remained no parleying with the trial. No alternative but victory or death. But the evils we encounter in warfare, seem to demand less decision, more destructive. The warm beams of the veller, in the fable, to throw aside the cloak, the tempest could not tear from him.

Look to that crown! and to him who has those promises that they are inheriting, who have overcome. They felt all your trials; they sorrows; they encountered all your dangers with all your enemies; had hearts as cold as enemies as many, and as mighty; fears as perplexing; and temptations as harassing came through the blood of the Lamb. Notwithstanding the promises; and opposition, and doubt and temptation, and sin, are things unknown to them. A few years ago many of them were in warfare; but now in the land of victory. Their warfare is ended; their warfare done; their voyage they have reached the harbour; and landed on the shore of blest eternity." The crown of pleasure, the fulness of joy, the house not made with hands, the mansions in Jehovah's dwelling, the life that fills our souls with confidence.

those years are those? more than probable not yours, not mine. But if they were, fourscore years or fourscore moments is the same, when compared with those boundless, endless oceans of ages that eternity contains. O the heights, and depths, and lengths of that love, which gives as a free gift to an unworthy sinner that eternal life! Precious encouragement for following the Lamb, through light or darkness, life or death! Look to him, and look to heaven, then onwards go, till life concludes, and Jesus gives the crown.

CHAPTER XVIII.

ON BACKSLIDING.

§ 1. **M**ANY are the painful spectacles presented in this world to the Christian's view; but none more painful than to see those, who once promised fair for heaven, turning back into perdition. In all ages this sad sight has been too frequently beheld. Among the twelve apostles was a Judas, who betrayed his Lord. Among the companions of the blessed Paul was a Demas, who forsook him, "having loved this present world." Among those to whom he preached the gospel were foolish Galatians, who, as if bewitched, obeyed not Jesus crucified; and fallen Corinthians, of whom he said, "I fear lest my God will humble me among you, and that I shall bewail many which have sinned, and have not repented of the uncleanness, and fornication, and lasciviousness, which they have committed."

No new thing then happens to the flock of Jesus, when some of whom they once hoped well, forsake the Lord. Nor, though it pain, need this discourage his sincere disciples. He knows his own, and says of them, "Thou hast a few names even in Sardis, that have not defiled their garments, and they shall walk with me in white, for they are worthy."

§ 2. The causes of backsliding are many is to be apprehended that a cause, which cases, is the want of real grace. Many pro never possessed it. When they fall away th sustains no real loss; the number travelling diminished; for they were hypocrites or sel word of God represents this, as a principal ing. "They went out from us, but they "He that receiveth the seed into stony plac eth the word, and with joy receiveth it: ye in himself, but dureth for a while."^b Perso tion never were the children of God. T pleased and profited, but the *root* was alwa foolish virgins were always different from had the lamp; but they never had the oil: disciple of Christ who does not at heart for him. Many profess religion that are neve They leave some sins, they make some sac feelings are roused, and perhaps they stan when the world bids high enough for their nounce religion, and return to the ways the sake. A celebrated statesman used to sa has his price. However we may disbelieve may assert, that every one who professes being truly converted to God, has, as *to thi*. For some the world must bid higher than offer of an ungodly, but pleasing, wife or b

ages, "choke the word, and they become unfruitful."^c The fear of man insnares some; the love of gain entangles others; and worldly companions, and worldly marriages, draw multitudes away.

§ 3. Backsliding may properly be distinguished into secret and open. The former takes place in the case of those, who do not openly renounce religion; but who no longer feel its vital power, or on whom its influence is gradually declining. Such was the case of the church at Ephesus, when the Lord Jesus, after commending their labours, fidelity, and patience, added, "Nevertheless I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first love."^d Such also was the case of many in the church at Sardis, when the Saviour said, "I know thy works, that thou hast a name, that thou livest, and art dead. Be watchful, and strengthen the things which remain, that are ready to die."^e Such also, in a still more deplorable degree, was their case at Laodicea, of whom he said, "Because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth. Thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked."^f In none of these cases was the form of religion laid aside. But, alas! its life was going, or gone. They at Ephesus, who had fallen least, had left their first love. That they had dreadfully, though secretly, and inwardly, fallen, is evident from the admonition which the Lord addressed to them. They at Sardis had sunk still lower. All was not dead, but all was dying. They at Laodicea had sunk the lowest, and they were in a kind of middle state between the careless worldling and the zealous Christian. Not cold, as those who are dead to every religious feeling; not hot, as those who are pressing on to glory; but like lukewarm water, in a middle condition, between the cold and the hot.

As some thus secretly backslide by losing love to the Saviour and religion, others do so by forsaking him as the ground of their hope. The apostle evidently represents the Galatians as falling away from Christ: "Christ is become of no effect unto you, whosoever of you are justified by the law; ye are fallen from grace." The sin of those, who were thus addressed,

^c Mark iv. 19. ^d Rev. ii. 4, 5. ^e Rev. iii. 1, 2. ^f Rev. iii. 15—1

appears to have been the uniting the works of the Christ, as the ground of their dependence. In doing so they are described as getting into a state, in which they value their interest in the Saviour, and thus in reality fall away from him.

Secret backsliding is inexpressibly dangerous. Persons who have thus declined from religion, may yet maintain outward forms, frequent the house of prayer occasionally, keep up some connexion with the church of Christ, and give rise to no suspicions respecting their real state. The Lord Jesus, such as saying, That they are rich, and have need of nothing, but declares that they are wretched, and miserable, and blind, and naked. How dreadful is their delusion! They think that all is well, when all is ill! and deem this life to be eternity, till they enter that solemn state, and find that religion was delusion, and that they are lost for ever. How needful a duty is self-examination! how needful is it to keep the heart, and to keep the heart with all diligence, for it are the issues of life!

Open backsliding takes place when they who have the life and power of religion, openly forsake their allegiance to the Saviour, and return to the world, to folly, and to sin.

§ 4. In both cases backsliding is an inexpressibly evil. No language can describe its mischief, and when it is continued, no words express its enormity.

This dreadful evil is commonly a gradual evil. Backsliders all at once. Backsliders in turning from happiness, commonly go step by step, till they reach the final apostasy, and eternal perdition. First, love to God and religion declines in their hearts. As this love declines, their hatred to sin becomes weaker, and the world gains its influence. Some then give way to a spirit of pride, vanity, and self-importance. Others yield their affections to the world. They allow this to be busy with them in their closets, and in the house of God. By degrees secret communion with God is neglected. Little delight is found in devotion, and private prayer is first occasionally, and then wholly, disregarded. If at the head of a family, family prayer is dropped. Public duties are soon affected. They are not attentive to the house of God. Its services are then thought tedious; and first one is neglected and then

the Lord's table is slighted. Social meetings for prayer and religious conversation are altogether abandoned. Their inclination is turned another way : they had rather spend two hours a-day in trifling tittle-tattle, than half an hour a-week seeking spiritual benefit. They grow more and more weary of the strictness of religion. Their taste for its pleasures gradually dies. Their Christian friends are forsaken. They grow tired of true friends, and pleased with false ones ; like

Israelites who were pleased with the spies, but thought Shua and Moses their enemies. They form new intimacies, revive old ones, with those that are strangers to the path of peace. At length they become again mere followers of the world ; and their conduct and deportment are commonly suited to their fallen condition. Do Christian friends endeavour to stop them in their progress to destruction, in some a more painful feelings are excited, some half-formed resolutions are made ; but all soon vanishes, and again they pursue their declining path. Others receive with disgust the warnings of Christian friendship ; and go on without perceiving their guilt and insensible of their guilt. " I do not perceive that I am fallen," says the lukewarm professor. Unhappy man ! why then do all else perceive it ? Why is your place at the table of God so often empty ? Why are all religious exercises in your Christian friends neglected ? Why is the table of the Lord slighted ? Why is the prosperity of the Saviour's cause a matter of no concern to you ? Why so different from what you once were ? " Oh," replies the self-deceiver, " I am satisfied. The minister does not preach as he used to do, nor friends behave as they formerly did." Such are the excuses and complaints of many backsliders. Unhappy creatures ! they are like a man that having lost his sight, finds himself with the sun instead of his eyes, and says of that bright luminary at noon-day, " It does not shine as it used to do."

§ 5. On the guilt and mischiefs of backsliding, the writer will insert with some small alterations a letter, written several years ago to a young female, who had fallen from religion, and of whose restoration there appeared some flattering, though still delusive hope.

" My dear friend,

" Allow me by writing a few lines to you, to give you

another expression of my anxious concern for your eternal welfare; yes, your eternal welfare; for what will long seem worth a single thought, except the blessings of eternity! Soon, Sarah, will you find that nothing else was worth one.

"I would hope, that the repentance and grief for your conduct, which you expressed last sabbath but one, have not again vanished, like the morning cloud or the early dew. I prayed for you, not merely at that time, but often before, and if you truly return to the paths of peace, shall think these prayers answered.

"And what, Sarah, is now the state of your heart? Is it again thoughtless? again hardened? God forbid! and grant that it may be tender, humble, and penitent! My dear friend, you have need of repentance. I do not wish to upbraid you with any thing that is passed; yet love to your soul makes it needful to say to you—You have need of repentance, of deep repentance. Surely you must have fallen away far from God. But are you penitent? If you are, I would not break the bruised reed. Rather would I direct you to the promises of your loving, though lately forsaken, God. Then hear him saying in his word, 'Return unto me, and I will return unto you. 'Return, ye backsliding children, and I will heal your backslidings.' 'I will heal their backslidings, I will love them freely.' 'If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.' 'The blood of Jesus Christ, his Son, cleanseth us from all sin.' To you these promises are made; let them not be made in vain. Still God is willing to receive you; still Jesus is willing to welcome you. His blood may yet cleanse you from your sins, and his kind hand support your feeble steps. Behold backsliding Peter. He found mercy; and, gone from this world, joins in the songs of the redeemed above. Oh, Sarah, seek the Saviour's grace afresh: you will not seek in vain:

* His bleeding heart will make you room,

* His opened arms will take you in.

Yet he would give you peace, give you pardon, give you heaven, and join you soon to his redeemed above. And does it not melt your heart to think—And would my injured Saviour again receive me? and would my forsaken God again welcome me? He would, indeed he would.—And may I so

down with his saints above ? and may my happy spirit adore his love, when this now healthful body is a lifeless corpse, and this cold heart is colder in the grave ? O ! may eternal blessedness then be mine ? It may. And shall I slight it longer ? Shall I turn from the way of life ? Shall I forsake my kind Redeemer ? Break, O my God ! the hard heart that has deceived me, and let it never deceive me more !

“ But, my dear friend, while the promises of grace should encourage your return ; to strengthen your earnestness, you may profitably unite with the motives they furnish, the consideration of what you were doing. You had, I am persuaded, nearly given up religion altogether. If you had done so quite, think what you would have done. Where would have been your hopes, your friends, your comforts, and where ere long your soul ? In such a state, if turning your eyes to heaven, you might have said, There dwells the Lord : once I could say, There dwells *my* God ; but alas ! no longer mine. Once he was my friend ; but now I have made him my enemy. His love was my portion ; but it is mine no more. There dwells the Saviour, once *my* Saviour ; but now I have no interest in him. Others are happy in his love ; but I have lost that happiness : others are safe under his care ; but I am out of his protection : others have their sins blotted out in his blood ; once I thought mine were ; but I have crucified him afresh, and brought a double load of guilt upon my own soul. There dwell also his faithful friends. They toiled and suffered here, but rest in heaven ; and once I hoped to partake of their joys ; but now that hope is gone. God is my God no longer : Christ is my Saviour no longer : heaven my hoped-for home no longer.

“ I do not say, Sarah, that these should be your melancholy reflections now. I pray that this letter may find you returning to God. But they might have been so, if you had continued backsliding ; and should be so, if you ever fall from Christ. And let the thought of the dreadful danger you have been in, fill you with watchfulness and humility, and lead you to prayer. Great has been your danger ; for, oh ! it is beyond human power to describe the evils of backsliding from the living God. To backslide altogether, is to give up God ; to give up Christ ; to give up hope, comfort, and heaven ; to make yourself the slave of Satan ; to prepare you

portion, instead of peace and praise. In fine, Sars slide, is to act so wicked, so mad, so hellish a part, that devils themselves can scarcely wish any to act a w had you begun to act this part? God be praised, mourn that you did so! Flee to him, my friend, af with him the promises I have mentioned from Praise him that he did not give you over to heart! and O! may you hereafter praise him heaven.

“ Depend upon it, my dear friend, the view now of the guilt of backsliding is not too strong. T God represents confirmed backsliders as ‘ turned Satan ;’ as ‘ having damnation because they hav their faith ;’ as drawing ‘ back unto perdition ;’ as out of the eternal rest ; as crucifying to themselves God afresh, and putting him to an open shame ; as l den under foot the Son of God, and counted the b covenant, wherewith they were sanctified, an unl as doing despite to the Spirit of grace ; as fallin hands of the living God, and he is a consuming fi as having their latter end worse than the begin them there remains a certain fearful looking for o and of fiery indignation, which shall devour the

examine your own state ; to distrust yourself ; to depend on your Redeemer ; and to dread the guilt of backsliding, more than the wretchedness to which it leads.

‘ Again, Sarah, if you have felt the pangs of a wounded conscience, seek for peace afresh, through the blood of the Lamb ; and let the unhappy hours you have passed, and the loss your fall has occasioned, be so many motives with you to return to God, and to cleave to Christ. Surely you have not that thoughtlessness and laughter cannot make the backslider’s state happy. You know something of this truth, many others know much of it. I reminded you of a friend, who told me how happy he was in the ways of God. Peace which God made life pleasant. The night and the day were to him comfortable, and fear fled far from him : but the tempter suggested to him, What need so much ado about religion ? These words, or something to this effect, run in his mind. At length he yielded ; he went backward ; and the tempter triumphed. And now his comforts were gone. He could not lie down at night, without fear of waking in eternal torment before the morning. He found it was a bitter, as well as guilty, thing, to forsake his Redeemer. Learn wisdom, Sarah, from your own unhappiness. Learn it from that of others. You have been near the edge of a precipice, from which many who reach it, never return, but fall from God to no more. O be thankful, that you have not fallen quite now ! O be watchful, lest you should ! O strive ! O pray ! Let your repentance be not this time, what it was a few months back.

‘ Should I say more, Sarah ; then again I would admonish you to look forward to future things. Think of your dying, of your pulse fluttering, your heart failing, your friends bidding you a last farewell, and you departing to meet your God. What comfort it will give you, if you have a Saviour in heaven ! What misery it will cause you, should you then be found a backslider, and then have to think that this friendly warning did you no good ! Think yourself standing before your Judge. How happy if you meet his smile ! if you find blood has blotted out every sin, and the sin of forsaking God among the dreadful list ! And, Sarah, this happiness will be yours, if you return and cleave to him. But, oh ! how wretched would you be, if you should meet his frown, and

Here lie those whom the world once charmed, and for it slighted their immortal souls, and what is them now ! and soon shall this youthful and he like theirs, be mouldering dust ; and soon shall limbs be common earth. Soon will my eyes be the world ; and all its cares, and all its pleasures pain nor please me in the grave ; but then when immortal spirit ? That cannot die ; that lives for shall I sell that soul to Satan, and get this world and shall I give up my Saviour, and throw my ! Oh, foolish heart, that ever thought of doing it ! ed and miserable creature that I have been ! for do so.

“ My dear friend, what shall I say more ? thought of seeing you hereafter at the left hand of Judge. I mourn the thought of never meeting world of peace, to whom I have often broken the Could I prevent your departure, never should Return to God, and peace will again be yours. Jesus, and you will yet be happy. But let it purpose of heart. Let it be with earnest prayer with a watchful jealousy lest you should deceive a concern of endless consequence. Learn to live

§ 6. Do I address a backslider? Probably all that has now been said will have no more effect on you, than I fear it had on her to whom it was originally written, and who is since gone to her dread account. Yet shall I leave you for ever, and not make one more attempt to restore you to the paths of life! Stop then, I beseech you, before the shades of death surround your head, before the voice of mercy is withdrawn for ever; stop, I beseech you, and a little more consider your ways.

Think of your sin: many are its aggravations. You have sinned against the world. You have thrown a stumbling-block in the way of the unconverted, and exposed them and yourself to the woe denounced by the Lord Jesus Christ: Woe to the world because of offences; but woe unto that man by whom the offence cometh. And are not you that wretched creature! Oh, how awful is it for one that has professed religion, to injure the immortal souls of others! and to assist Satan in leading multitudes to perdition!

You have sinned against your relatives. If they are the disciples of Jesus, how have you blasted their hopes respecting you, and how ill requited them for all their tenderness, kindness, and care? If they know him not, you have probably hardened them in carelessness and sin, and thus contributed to sink those who are dearest to you down to hell.

You have sinned against yourself. You might have been respected and beloved, esteemed and useful in life; and have possessed a bright inheritance in heaven; but alas! how low is your conduct sunk you! how has it deprived you of respect and affection in this life, and of every cheering hope for the eternal world!

You have sinned against your Christian friends. You professed to be their friend, yet have acted the part of the worst enemies. The world is ready to reproach them without cause; but you have given the world occasion to do so, and those who pity you, yet abhor your conduct and disown you, may be in your reproach.

You have sinned against the Lord Jesus Christ. He died to redeem you from sin. Often have you heard of his dying love. You professed to ground your hopes upon it. But oh! all his dying love and living care, for all his sorrows, and *bitter death*, what a return have you made him! You have

have heard, every warning you have had, aggravated and double your condemnation! How may these who once were your companions, and the men who have preached to you the everlasting gospel, and the promises that you once knew the ways of God, and turned back unto perdition! They who now pity and will then pity you no longer, but own that you are just.

And are all your professions come to this? To profess religion, but to make yourself more completely of the devil by forsaking it? Has that Redeemer shed his blood for you deserved no better than this? Do you thus requite all his sufferings, all his love and goodness? Have you found something more to love than Christ? That should be a treasure indeed, if you sell your own soul to the devil, and renounce Christ, and hope, and holiness, and happiness. Will your irreligious companions make up to you the loss? Oh, poor deceived unhappy creature, in your way, they who are now your companions will soon be your companions in hell! How will you injure and forsake your Redeemer?

You have sinned against the Holy Spirit. S

lie for you? and by the workings of his Spirit led you to Saviour? and made you a child of his own, instead of heir of wrath? And is this your return to your merciful Father?

Your sin against God is of the most dreadfully heinous kind. Are you not under the most solemn vows to be the Lord's? Would you forget them, God will not forget them, and if you break them your soul will lie under the horrible guilt of perjury unto God. How many solemn engagements have you made to be the Lord's! How many vows in private, when no eye but God's saw you, no ear but God's heard you! at solemn professions before the church and the Lord! engagements of your baptism, and those repeated again and again at the table of the Lord! Will you break all these promises, and become guilty of telling not one lie only to God, but many? How hateful is a lie! all liars shall have their part in the lake that burneth with fire and brimstone. Lord Jesus describes the devil as the father of lies, and of all liars. If lying to men is so hateful, what must it be to lie to God? Of this horrible crime you will be guilty, if you take the way of peace. It may be said at last, You promised to be the Lord's; but, miserable liar! you broke all these promises; you took the vows of God upon you, and you became a poor, perjured wretch, by slighting all those promises. O my fellow sinner! no lies are so aggravated as the backslider's lies to God. They are wilful lies; for he goes fully from Christ, and will not stop, though God and man treat him to return. They are lies whose guilt is heightened by the base ingratitude of forsaking a good God and a gracious Saviour; and heightened still more by the horrible choice he makes: he leaves Christ for the world that crucified his Lord; and forsakes God for sin and the devil. I have read of a backslider that said, "I will not have salvation—nothing for me but hell. Come, O devil, and take me."

Few speak thus plainly; but all that wilfully forsake Christ, make this dreadful choice; and would they speak out in reality they do, each would say, Lord Jesus, I renounce thee, I leave thee. Satan, I choose thee as my Lord. Heaven I forsake. Come, devil, you shall be my owner, and I shall be my home. Like Altamont, every backslider

damned—eternal hellishness acquired?—Oh, do
Perhaps you laugh; but will you laugh in mi
you jest; but will you jest in hell? Perhaps
place of woe a bugbear; will you on a dy
Voltaire? did Tom Paine? did the unhappy
infidel, who cried, "O thou blasphemed, yet
Lord God! hell itself is a refuge if it hide
frown?"

Oh listen not to the delusions of unbelief, a
tions of an infernal foe! Rather seek mercy.
wrath to come. Is not death already clad in
turn to him who would take the sting of death

Behold your once dying, but now risen, Lor
dying love be lost on you? Will you reject
heavenly friend? Behold his dying sorrows
agonies, his torturing cross, his flowing blood.
the immense eternal love, that prompted him
sorrows for you. Can you see this, and yet fo
who bought you? Or think of his kingdom.
meeting of his friends, when all his ransomed f
in heaven. O unhappy creature! shall you
miss you there? Shall your minister see that y
Shall those, with whom you have often sat dov

thoughtless youth, that loved a dying world, and left our Lord? and where all his vain delights? Where now the unhappy girl, that once promised fair for glory? and where all for which she denied her Redeemer, and sold her soul? Ah, had she persevered how different had been her lot! That hapless soul, which is now overwhelmed with eternal night, had then been one of our happy band; had then enjoyed the crown that fadeth not away.

Ah, my friend! these things are not cunningly devised fables. The time will come, when your Christian friends, who cleave to the Saviour, will rest in heaven; and when, if you return not to him, you and they must part for ever. Oh! if you leave them now, this wilful parting is the dread forerunner of an eternal separation. Now to be parted from the flock of God perhaps you feel but little; but what will it be to be parted from it for ever?

If you would return to the ways of peace, inquire seriously, what has been the occasion of your fall? and forsake it, though it may cause you as much pain as to cut off a right hand. Forsake especially worldly associates; or every attempt to return to God will be in vain. Begin with religion again as you began at first. Seek salvation through the blood of Jesus. Pray much. Frequent divine ordinances. Cherish religious conversation: and God will hear your prayers, and help your soul, and give you grace to escape from the snare of the devil. Then who will sing of redeeming love with a heart so warm as you? All the motives that love and gratitude can furnish, urge you to return. All the motives that can spring from pity for yourself, urge your immediate return. All the blessings of eternal life invite you back to God. All the sorrows of the Saviour urge you to flee to him. And all the terrors of eternal death should frighten you from the paths of the destroyer.

§ 7. Shall I, by a statement of painful facts that I have witnessed, endeavour to offer one motive more for your immediately returning to the Saviour, who is willing to have mercy upon you, or for your watching, praying, and persevering.—I was once called to see a person in much distress of mind, who professed religion, but who declared that his conduct had been inconsistent with his profession. He spoke of the extreme distress that he then felt, and observing that he

she was conlined to a bed of affliction, and at the grave. With a countenance full of bitterness often spoke of her guilt and folly in such expressions following: "I once knew the way; I once died with comfort; but now I cannot—I feel no mercy for me." Unexpectedly her illness took a turn; she would then say, "I have suffered no less than half so much as I deserve for my base ingratitude." Speaking of her views when at the worst, she would have given the world to have had her say, and said, that at that time she saw nothing but death, and hell along with it! How dismal a prospect a day of suffering or dissolution! Yet if you are not a backslider, what other prospect can you have but to watch and pray. Return to the Saviour, or cleave to him when your fainting head can rise from its pillow, when the blood grows cold at your heart, and when about to take its final flight; your prospect made bright by eternal life, and your peace unshaken as the prom

Christian warfare ; yet many are the fountains of consolation to which the sacred Scriptures direct the thirsty pilgrim's view. For happiness, look to your Redeemer, to your God, and to your home.

Look to your Redeemer, and listen to the gracious words that proceed from his compassionate lips. "Let not your heart be troubled ; ye believe in God, believe also in me. He that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him. If a man love me, he will keep my words : and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him. Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you ; not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid."^a "The Father himself loveth you, because ye have loved me, and have believed that I came out from God." "My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me : and I give unto them eternal life ; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand."^b

Perhaps your soul may, at times, be cast down and distressed ; but remember, when friends are absent, the Lord Jesus is present. The chief Shepherd is for ever near you ; and he who laid down his life for you, will doubtless make your comfort and welfare his care. Let your faith but repose aright upon the Saviour's love, and nothing will seem dark on this side the grave, and all appear bright beyond it. If at times you sow in sorrow, you will doubtless reap in joy. Hear your Lord saying, "I will never leave thee nor forsake thee."^c Above all, hear him saying, "My grace is sufficient for thee. Lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the world."^d What more can you desire ? Jesus always with you—can you then ever indulge distress ? Jesus always with you—can you then ever want a counsellor ? Jesus always with you—can you then ever despair of final conquest ? He who laid down his life for you, ever attentive to your welfare—no moment passing in which he is absent ; no moment coming when he shall leave you, or his helping hand be far away. O rejoice in these promises ! they are worth more than all the world.

(a) John xiv. 1, 21, 23, 27.

(b) John x. 14, 27, 28.
(d) 2 Cor. xii. 9. Matt. xxviii. 20.

(c) Heb. xiii. 5.

follower had no cause for fear; and he still rem
he had borne for man. Doubtless the same co
dwells in his breast. The flight of a few short
man; but the revolution of eternal ages will n
compassionate Son of God. Think what ten
played, in a thousand forms, during his short s
His business was to save. His office, to hea
hearted. Imperfect friends and bitter foes recei
of his tender compassion. Behold the Savio
course with friends. Sympathizing with thei
rows, he wept at the grave of Lazarus. He
dulness and errors of his disciples; and thoug
their faults, treated them with one unvarying
ness. When they, who should have watche
his agony, slept, instead of severely reproving
derly excused their fault, and said, "The sp
willing but the flesh is weak." When Peter de
afterwards repented, he still owned him as a bro
when sending a message to him and the other
had so lately been fugitives in the hour of his
tell MY BRETHREN that they go into Galilee, a
they see me."^f When Thomas, after his resu
"Except I shall see in his hands the print of

sought his aid, he ever showed tenderness and love. The centurion besought him to heal his servant, and Jesus said, "I will come and heal him."ⁱ Jairus, worshipping him, said, "My daughter is even now dead; but come, and lay thy hands on her, and she shall live."^k Attentive to the cry of sorrow, Jesus arose and went. The leper said, "Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean." Jesus answered, "I will; be thou clean."^l Blind Bartimeus cried, "Thou Son of David, have mercy on me." The disciples, less compassionate than their Lord, rebuked the importunate sufferer; but Jesus said unto him, "Receive thy sight; thy faith hath saved thee."^m The widow of Canaan implored his help for her afflicted daughter. At first he seemed to hesitate; but only hesitated to prove her faith; and then said to her, "O woman, great is thy faith; be it unto thee even as thou wilt."ⁿ Often unsolicited he bestowed his aid. Thus to him, who lay by the pool of Bethesda, he said, "Rise, take up thy bed, and walk."^o When he met the widow, who mourned the loss of her only son, he said, "Weep not;" and with a voice, powerful as that which shall at length awaken all the dead, he said to the lamented object of her affection, that lay stretched lifeless on the bier, "Young man, I say unto thee, arise."^p Even the poor guilty adulteress, that was conveyed into his presence, experienced his mercy. When Jesus said to her, "Hath no man condemned thee?" and she said, "No man, Lord;" he said, "Neither do I condemn thee; go, and sin no more."^q The tenderness of Jesus was strongly displayed even to his bitterest foes. He wept over impenitent Jerusalem; shed tears at the misery of those, who were about to shed his blood. He prayed for his murderers, and desired their life who wrought his death; their happiness who loaded him with woe. Not in an hour of cool reflection, before or after his dreadful sorrows; but in the midst of those sufferings he prayed, "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they are doing."^r And after his resurrection, breathing forth the same unconquered tenderness, he directed the tidings of mercy to be proclaimed first to his murderers; and commanded his apostles to begin publishing forgiveness at Jeru-

⁽ⁱ⁾ Matt. viii. 7.^(m) Luke xviii. 38, 42.^(p) Luke vii. 11.^(k) Matt. ix. 18.⁽ⁿ⁾ Matt. xv. 28.^(q) John viii. 10, 11.^(r) Luke xxiii. 34.^(l) Matt. viii. 2, 3.^(o) John 4. 8.^(r) Luke xix. 41.

salem.^c The tenderness thus displayed in his conduct is presented as essential to his character. While, as he feeds all his flock, he shows peculiar compassion to the weak. It is said, "He shall gather the lambs with his arms, and carry them in his bosom; and shall gently lead those that are with young."^a How safe is the lamb in the shepherd's arm! or folded within the shepherd's bosom! How happy their lot whom Jesus gently leads in security on to heaven, the fold where all his flock are gathered! "The bruised reed he will not break, and the smoking flax he will not quench."^v Weak as a reed, might be broken for weakness; but a bruised reed is still weaker. Those who are thus weak, will he not reject, but support? As grace is like a little spark, he will not despise or smother it; but will fan it to a flame.

§ 3. All the tenderness the Saviour ever displays is governed in his breast. He is not less compassionate when removed to his eternal throne; nor less interested in the welfare of his flock, because he has left the wilderness sojourn. In the most expressive language he reveals his interest in their happiness, his feeling for them, which was not changed in his persecuting career, he said, "Saul persecutedst thou ME?" Thee, Lord! were not thy hands ended; wast thou not far above the reach of his sin and his cruel hand! Thou wast; but still didst thou persecutest thou ME?" Thy flock was persecuted; the injury done to them, was done to thee. The heart was felt with the members suffering upon earth.

Conformably with this representation, it is declared, that he nourisheth and cherisheth the church, for they are members of his body, of his flesh and of his bones. It is a gracious representation! Man naturally feels for the welfare of his body; and anxious to supply it with food to shield it from harm, to guard it from pain, and to its comfort and welfare. This care to nourish and cherish the body, is declared to be like that care, which Jesus entertains to nourish and cherish his flock. It is but an imitation of his care. With more than the care of a parent bird fostering her young; with more tenderness of a nurse cherishing her infant charge

(c) Luke xxiv. 47.

(u) Isa. xl. 11.

(v) Mat.

than the affection of a mother fondling her tender offspring ; with a love powerful as that self-love, which prompts man to feel for his own body, does the Lord Jesus feel for his church ; and tend, and watch, and cherish, and feed, and bless his flock.

Think of him, whose love fills heaven with happiness ; whose dying sorrows have procured immortal life for countless multitudes ; whose compassion shines like the noon-day sun, but has no setting beam ; and can you distrust such tenderness ? or droop beneath the noon-day warmth of such compassion ? Is he so kind, why do you not rejoice incessantly in him ? Surely when you droop in sadness, he might say, "O thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt ? didst thou find in thy Redeemer ought to occasion thy fears ? Dost thou see any want of love in him ? any want of richness in his grace ? or of freeness in his promises ?" O look more to him for peace ! Say of this compassionate Jesus, He is God my Saviour ; of this tender yet almighty Shepherd, He is my Shepherd ; and you may add, "I shall not want. He maketh me to lie down in green pastures : he leadeth me beside the still waters. Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil : for thou art with me ; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me."

§ 4. The disciples of Jesus are also taught to view him as their Intercessor ; and hence should flow into their souls that "peace which passeth all understanding." The Most High hath not revealed the mode of the Saviour's intercession for his flock ; but has fully asserted its reality. Christ "is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us."^w "If any man sin we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous."^x "He is able to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him ; seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them."^y "We have a great High Priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God. Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need."^z

To intercede, is to present petitions in behalf of another ; to act as an advocate, is to plead another's cause, and attend to

(w) Rom. viii. 34.
(v) Heb. vii. 25. *

(x) 1 John ii. 1.
(z) Heb. iv. 14, 16.

intercession impart to the sighs and lipings of follower ! Think of him as the Son of God, the his Father's glory : and can he plead your cause can it fail when trusted in his hands ? His interceded for multitudes, which no man can number. O go to him ! He loved thee as angels cannot feel for thee as angels cannot feel. They know is to sigh, to sorrow, and to weep ; but he, for all this. They know not what it is to hunger ; to be weary and faint, to be persecuted and scorned ; sadness, and to die in woe ; but he, who is thy comfort, knows all this ; for he has felt it all. And since he hath suffered being tempted, he is able to succour them that are tempted."a Tell him of thy sorrow, had sorrow. Tell him of thy enemies—he overcometh them. Unfold to him all the secret sadness ; —he once felt the bitterness of woe. When weak, give him grace to strengthen thee ; when troubled, impart to cheer ; when fallen, beg his strength to raise thee ; in darkness look to him ; and when thy poor defence are but the moanings of a broken heart, still look to him, whose lives to plead thy cause. Solace thy soul, by the intercession thou hast. An intercessor for ev

uor with my hope ; so much imperfection with all my ices ; so many wandering imaginations even with my t solemn prayers ; that if thou dost not help me I must , and die. If thou dost not plead for me, I must give up y hope ; but thou wilt plead for me. Thou art my in-ssor, and in thee let me find my everlasting all ; and cold ; this heart, does it not wish, and pray, and long to love ? and weak as is this faith, does it not fix upon thee, and turn to thee ? and dim as is this hope, yet thou knowest glimmering, trembling hope, would not fix on any thing thee ; nor would I be without this hope for all the works hands have made. But let this hope brighten ; and plead a for me ; and take into thy care my everlasting concerns ; let me rejoice in thee, as my advocate and eternal friend, then thy will be done for every thing besides !

5. The Christian is represented as the peculiar property Christ. "Whether we live we live unto the Lord, and ether we die we die unto the Lord ; ~~whether~~ we live there- or die we are the Lord's ;" and his through the purchase is blood, "bought with a price" inestimable. The thought elightful—"We are the Lord's." ~~What more can~~ the soul re to secure its happiness ? ~~Whether we live~~ we are the d's—then all his dealings must be meant in mercy, and must end in good. Whether we die ~~we are the Lord's~~— a all must be well in the world unseen. The Christian y say, "I know not where heaven is ; but Jesus knows, I am his. When soul and body part, my spirit will be ranger to the wondrous path that conducts the righteous he presence of their God ; but Jesus knows the way, and n his. Whatever scenes may open on my view, how so- n soever the realities that await me, when I enter eternity, one thing assures me that all must be right,—“Whether live or die we are the Lord's.” “We are the Lord's”—de- iful words—sweet as the harmony of heaven. A thou- d and a thousand times might the charming declaration epeated, and yet not all its power be felt, nor all its value pprehended. We are the Lord's—then welcome life ! that may live to him ; and welcome death ! that we may go him ; welcome the services of time ! they are what he re- res ; and welcome the rest of eternity ! it is what he pre- s. *Welcome the Christian warfare ! being his makes*

victory certain. Welcome the battle! being his as crown. Welcome health or weakness, life or death, eternity, earth or heaven! Let us but hear, "Welcome Lord's," and each shall be welcome—all shall be welcome.

§ 6. The Lord Jesus Christ is also declared to be our Father and brother of his flock. He owns the endearing appellation "Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you." How wonderful the love which applies such endearment to those who were once so far from God and holiness! boundless the blessedness of having in Immanuel: a Father and a friend! All that is valuable in earthly friendships infinitely more, is comprehended in his. The tenderest friendships of earth are but a mutual tribute of affection each receives, and each gives. Your friends love you; you love them, and your love to them is strength to their love to you; but O how different is his friendship! He died for you when you were his enemy! He is our friend. The dearest relatives below are frail as the flowers of the field; but he is liable to no decay. When the human heart is willing, they often have a feeble hand; and our prayers and unavailing pity is frequently all the relief they can administer to those they love the best. Our means are not thus limited. When they can only weep over our sorrows with our sorrows, he can drive those sorrows away. He can cheer when they can only weep. He can be

can lessen his love to his beloved flock; no slanderer pour his venom into the Redeemer's ear. His friendship endures the same through the short summer of prosperity, and the dark winter of adversity; and it endures for ever. When other friends are most faithful and affectionate, dear as the light that visits our eyes, or as the blood that warms our hearts, such is this world, that they often may be absent when wanted most. Distance may deprive us of their sympathy and affection, when these are most desirable; but this heavenly friend is ever near. He said, If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him."b If Jesus is our friend, we have one friend ever at hand, to hear the faintest whisper that solicits his aid. His friendship is eternal too, and this is the crown of all the rest. It lasts for eternity. Blessed eternity! It is eternity that will infuse the most rapturous delight into the triumphant believer's overflowing cup of happiness. It is eternity that will form the brightest ray in the triumphant believer's far more exceeding weight of heavenly glory; and it is eternity that renders the friendship of Jesus Christ so immense a blessing, that its worth might be for ever telling, yet for ever untold. Our most beloved friends must die; and we must die; and the fondest earthly connexions must shortly be dissolved. To mourn for the death of those we hold most dear, or to have them mourn on account of ours, is what we all are doomed to here. "The loss of friends is the sad tribute, I had almost said the sad equivalent, that in these regions of death we must pay for loving and being beloved;" but death shall never terminate the friendship of Jesus with his humble flock. That sweet, that awful word, eternity, makes him ours for ever. The sun which shines on the dwellings, where we live with our beloved friends below; the solid earth, on which we tread with them; the stars that shine on our evening walks in their company;—these, like us, are frail; and lasting as they seem, must come to nothing; but the friendship of Jesus Christ is stronger and more lasting than they. It will flourish in those new heavens wherein righteousness dwelleth. Beyond the gulf of death it will diffuse immortal good, through ages more numerous than the drops of summer rain, and the flakes

piety. It represents him as assuming a status
than that of friend. He is the brother of his flock.
he rose from the grave, he said, "Go tell my BRE-
they go into Galilee. Go to my BRETHREN,
them, I ascend unto my Father, and your Father,
God, and your God."^c "He is not ashamed
BRETHREN."^d As his brethren they are beloved
is a remarkable passage, in which he expresses
affection stronger than that of a brother. He said
my mother? and who are my brethren? Behold
and my brethren! For whosoever shall do the
Father which is in heaven, the same is my brother
and mother."^e His meaning evidently was, that
who does his Father's will, becomes united to him
closest relation. In one so close as singly to obtain
of his affection as a mother, and sister, and brother
share among them.

§ 8. How honourable, how delightful, such a
the Son of God! How wonderful the compassion
of the holy Jesus, in bringing into so sacred a communion
who were once the heirs of sin, and wrath, and darkness
raptures should fire the soul at the thought of
union! That Jesus, who gave angels and arch-

and now in heaven owns as his brethren all that truly love his name. In this low world of sin, misery, and death, the divine Jesus seeks friends and brethren, that will be eternally dear to his heart. Creator, Redeemer, Friend, and Brother, all unite in him. O, truths astonishing, yet delightful ! truths surpassing wonder, yet full of consolation ! truths, that had they not come from heaven, it would have been sin to credit, and which it is now sin to disbelieve ! O what is mortal praise, or mortal love, when offered to that Saviour, whose condescending goodness is so vast ! Could we offer the praise of angels—praises like those which angels offer would be languid, poor, and cold. Lord, what is ransomed man ! Man that, when washed in thy blood, claims thee as a brother, thou Ruler of the skies ! thou Lord of heaven ! Happy they who enjoy this sacred connexion with the adorable Son of God ! This, my brother, or my sister, is our highest honour. Ah, monarchs ! may the followers of the Lamb exclaim, keep your crowns, wear your vain titles, govern your wide empires, let us but reign in the presence of Jesus, and in heaven itself be known as the blood-bought kindred of the Son of God !

§ 9. Blessings immense and countless, for time and eternity, flow from such a union. If this enriches you, and peace and comfort should be your lot, you may placidly look forward to a world, where these shall be enjoyed in higher perfection through eternal days. If sorrow imbitter your way, and cloud your sky, you may rejoice in your hasty advances to that state, where the love of Jesus shall banish every grief. The friendship and love of this adorable Saviour and brother, will be the stay of his friends, when rocks crumble to dust, and mountains tremble to their base ; when the heavens shall vanish away like smoke, and when the fashion of the world, and the world itself, have passed away. Sweet will it be to smile amidst that last storm, and sweet indeed then to enjoy the brotherly love of a divine Saviour.

It is said, that on one occasion a poor aged Christian was observed making her scanty meal on bread and water, but expressing the warm gratitude of her heart, because the Saviour was hers. " All this," said she, " and Christ too." — *Rich are the poorest that have such a friend ; poor are the richest that have not.* It is related, that a gentleman one day took an acquaintance on the leads of his house, to show

which grace has made you an heir! Whatever you should be happy. You are so now, and everlasting years. Let sickness come, and blastful days; let paleness overspread your countenance; let the last enemy be stopping the blood at your heart. Christ you will be happy; happier infinitely in death, with a Saviour, than you could be without health, and life, and the riches of kingdoms, we tion. Think more how many blessings are centred in your Saviour; and rejoicing in your Lord, pursue your presence and abode.

§ 10. Though the chief work of the Lord Jesus was the happiness of his disciples, when this moment passed away, yet he kindly desires their comfort. It is true, to him who views eternity, our few hours appear no longer than a moment, come and gone in an instant; yet this life, in his sight, like a moment nothing, must have its peace and comfort, and spring from him. He spoke that divinely gracious discourse recorded in the fourteenth and two following chapters of the Gospel of John, that he might promote the temporal as well as the spiritual welfare, of his disciples. “I have I spoken unto you that in me ye might have life.”

disease, changing comforts, dying pleasures, and piercing griefs ; but through life, through death, on earth, in heaven, in me ye shall have unchanging comfort, in me ye may have peace. To promote this peace, the Lord Jesus has given many gracious promises. O exercise faith in them ! Consider they are as firm, and as sure, and as precious, as if you heard the Lord Jesus speaking them to you. When pensive and alone, meditating on the world to come, think you see your Saviour approach, and hear him say, " Let not your heart be troubled. In my Father's house are many mansions. I go to prepare a place for you." If oppressed by the malignity of men, go from their company, " enter into thy closet, and shut thy door ;" there try to realize the presence of your Lord, and hear him saying, " If the world hate you, ye know that it hated me before it hated you. If ye were of the world, the world would love his own : but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you." If encountering sorrow and pain, hear him saying, " Ye now have sorrow ; but I will see you again, and your heart shall rejoice, and your joy no man taketh from you." When wandering among the tombs, thinking of dear departed friends, whom you must meet no more on earth, and thinking how soon the grave must be your home, as it now is theirs, then hearken to the sweet promises of Jesus. " Where I am there shall also my servant be." " I will come again and receive you to myself, that where I am ye may be also." O would he, who once sojourned below, again descend and utter these and other heart-reviving words, where, with your Saviour speaking by your side, would be the darts of affliction, or the sting of death ! and where would be the victory of the grave ! If the Lord had been pointing you to a dwelling in the heavens, could you cease to rejoice in the prospect of that happier land ! Would you not weep, as though you wept not, and rejoice, as though you rejoiced not ; and often think, It was there, beyond these lower skies, that he taught me to expect my endless home. Or had he been warning you to expect hatred, or affliction, yet adding, that you were his friend, and that you should soon be glorified with him, could you mourn much at human hatred, or repine at earthly sorrows ? Would you not rather think, *My best, my most unalterable friend, has entered within*

the veil, and I am following apace; and by trials he will train me for his own abode. He will come from heaven, to converse with you; he will commune with you; he will not sit with you in mourning, or walk with you among the streets truly with you, as if he were thus to accompany you night, when you walk, or rest, or labour, he is with you: and his promises are as fresh from his lips, or as if an angel, had brought them to you from his heavenly Father.

§ 11. If grace has made this Saviour yours, how many blessings do you possess now, with humble yet cheerful confidence; yet if this confidence now diffuses a peace that passeth understanding, what will he impart when he shall appear in the clouds: when the sufferer of Calvary descends, and angelic hosts, and comes as the "worthy" when the sneers of infidelity are hushed: when his followers no longer appear a desecrated train, but led by him, ascend to him: then when the confusion of despairing sin before his awful bar, exceeds, in terrible depth, what the heart can conceive, as much as eternal joy surpasses temporal woe—then what will be the joy to him? And when all these solemnities are past, and bounded eternity stretches in infinite prospect before the triumphant soul—then what will it be to believe? The imagination must stop; none can conceive the overwhelming rapture.

§ 12. Among the innumerable privileges of God's people, the Scriptures expressly mention the care of holy angels. The word of God is as strong in power;^f great in glory;^g and there is access to the throne of God.^h It declares, that angels are employed by their heavenly Father, in the day of judgment;ⁱ but that their more frequent office is to minister to the heirs of salvation. These countless multitudes thus employed

(f) Ps. ciii. 20.

(g) Rev. x.

(h) 2 Kings xix. 35. 2 Sam. x.

say, "Are they not ALL ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation."^k They are employed in protecting and upholding the children of God.^l They minister to them through the fleeting span of life; and conduct to rest the triumphant spirit, when life's last conflict ends.^m How happy they who have such invisible but kind attendants! How rich the Saviour's love, that employs these glorious spirits to minister to the welfare of his feeble flock! How warm should be the gratitude, how fervent the love, how devout the holiness, of that feeble flock!

Thus animated by your Redeemer's love, and blest in his care, pursue your pilgrimage to heaven. When you contemplate his love, what is all you can render to him, but like the dust of the balance weighed against the world? When you stretch your views to eternal life, what is mortal life but the twinkling of an eye? And what the sorrows of time but like a drop of grief compared with an ocean of delight?

§ 13. A principal source of happiness to the followers of the Lamb, is found in their connexion with the great and blessed God, and in what he is to them.

Come, solace thy soul by viewing God, thy God, arrayed in all his mild attractive glories. He is "the God of all grace, who hath called us to his eternal glory."ⁿ "The God of all grace!" Precious words! What more comprehensive, what more kind, can a wounded soul, a contrite heart, desire! The God of all grace! How vast must be the treasures of his compassion! how boundless the riches of his love! Nor less boundless his strange and amazing condescension. "He hath called us to his eternal glory by Jesus Christ." Where now rise the heights of his love? where sink its depths? God, as the God of all grace, hath called us—the children of sin and woe, to glory—to eternal glory—and O, more amazing still!—to his eternal glory. What is there in the character of so good, so compassionate, though so great a God, that should excite one fear in a humble and contrite heart! In a not less attractive light is this great and holy God displayed, when his word says, "God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ."^o How emphatic is this

(k) Heb. i. 14.

(l) Ps. xxxiv. 7; xci. 11, 12.

(m) Luke xvi. 22.

(n) 1 Pet. v. 10.

(o) Eph. ii. 4-6.

language! Who can ever unfold the wonders of grace and goodness it reveals! God is not only merciful, but "rich in mercy;" not merely kind to man, when penitent and pardoned, but "loving with great love" poor perishing men "even when dead in trespasses and sins." Amazing grace! what grateful offerings does it not deserve! what fervent love and cheerful confidence should it infuse in every human heart! The Lord Jesus Christ, in whom dwelt all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge, displayed his Father's tenderness in the most impressive and gladdening manner, when he said to Philip, "Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip? he that hath seen me hath seen the Father."^p Whatever else the divine Saviour intended to express by these words, it is evident they must include the idea, that tenderness, compassion, and love, which dwelt in him, dwell in the eternal Father. When Jesus abode below, and appeared kind to every mourner, gracious to every suppliant, and full of melting love and tender pity for all that sought his aid, what humble penitent or downcast believer could have dreaded him? But he says, He that hath seen me hath seen the Father. Blessed declaration! It is as if he had said, "His compassion is like mine; his tenderness as vast; his love as boundless; his goodness as great." Be not then, my fellow-pilgrim; think what Jesus was, and what thy God is like him. When God represents his own condescension and compassion, he says, "Thus saith the Lord, the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Jehovah: I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones."^q Ah, great condescension! What more than to be revived by God, and cheered by his presence, can a humbled heart desire? Good is God, who thus encourages your trust in him, should his immeasurable grace, and rich compassionate fear, and doubt, and distress away!

§ 14. Art thou, my brother or sister, indeed a follower of the Lamb, then God is more than all this to thee, thy Friend, and Portion. "The Lord is merciful and slow to anger, and plenteous in mercy. For as the high above the earth, so great is his mercy toward

(p) John xiv. 9.


(q) Isa. lvii. 15.

Fear him. As far as the east is from the west, so far hath he removed our transgressions from us. Like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear him. For he knoweth our frame, he remembereth that we are dust." With what peace should these gracious declarations fill the soul. God is a Father—a Father in heaven—a Father who knows the frame of his children.—He sees its weakness; he perceives the dangers to which it is exposed; the sorrows to which it gives birth; and not only knows, "but remembers," that we are dust. Formed from the dust, man fades like a flower, perishing before a scorching blast. "His days are as grass; as a flower of the field, so he flourisheth: for the wind passeth over it, and it is gone; and the place thereof shall know it no more. But the mercy of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting upon them that fear him." Charming contrast! The frailty and vanity of man render the love of God more glorious. Man is for a moment; but the love of God for ever. Mortal man, in his best estate on earth, is like a withering flower; but the love of God to ransomed man never fades, but endures and shines for ever and ever.

God is the Friend, and Father, and Portion of those who belong to the holy Jesus. What nobler happiness can an immortal being require? The humble disciples of the Saviour may exclaim with the Psalmist, "Thou art my portion, O Lord." "Thou art my God, and I will praise thee; thou art my God, I will exalt thee." The followers of the world have their possessions: riches, honours, profits, pleasure; these are their treasure; but thou, the Lord of heaven and earth, art mine. Thou art my God, my Father, and Friend. Thou, whom angels venerate, and devils dread; whose smile is life, whose frown is death—thou art my God. Thou, whose possessions are heaven and earth—whose dwelling-place is eternity—whose favour is more to me than all the world—thou art my God. Thou art my Father too—mine in life—amidst its bustling, changing, vexing scenes, thou art my God.—In pain and in ease, in prosperity and adversity, in sickness or in health, thou art my God and Father; and thou wilt be mine in death; and then, in vast eternity, thou wilt be for ever mine.

§ 15. Such an interest as this in the favour and love of God is the greatest blessing an immortal creature can enjoy. None

can conceive how much is contained in those great Friend and Father, when the great and blessed whom they are applied. Were the high and low, and poor, of every nation under heaven, uniting to our comfort, all would be far outdone by the one—God our Friend. Were it possible for us legions of angels from their starry thrones, to wait our commands, to wait our welfare, or fetch us supplies of happiness from us—all would be outdone, far outdone by this one God our Friend. Suppose that you were endowed with lasting strength, and that the irresistible power and wisdom of the great Almighty were bestowed upon you—could you then fear? what enemies could excite alarm in your peaceful breast? And what could you do when possessed of might sufficient in a moment to create angels, or a world into being? Now, though we are as weak as the moth, and perish like a leaf, yet if we have a friend, we have in some sense omnipotence; our eternal God is the refuge of his people; and his power and infinite wisdom are engaged, under the influence of infinite love, in their behalf. How glorious is God how much more glorious himself! When we survey the glorious earth, the wide-spread heavens, the glorious silent sky glittering with ten thousand stars, how



sickness cloud your days, they cannot bid disease depart and health return ; but he can ; or else he can make pain better than ease, and sickness a greater good than health. If sin and sorrow oppress your soul, no earthly friends can take the load of guilt away ; nor can they comfort the troubled conscience, mourning for years of sin and folly ; but this almighty Father can fill the broken heart with heavenly peace : he can say, Be of good comfort ; thy sins are forgiven thee. He can forgive all the guilt that renders judgment terrible, and fill your soul with peace so sweet, and hope so strong, as to quell every fear, and silence every doubt. And all you want besides he can bestow. He can enrich you with plenty, or make loss and poverty better blessings than prosperity and wealth. He can fill your heart with love, and help you to believe, confide, rejoice. And when the solemn hour arrives, in which you must die, even in that momentous hour he has power to give all your departing soul will need. Then earthly friends, the dearest and the best, can only mourn. They cannot drive our fears away ; nor can they open the portals of heaven, and say, Come in, thou blessed. But God, your kind heavenly Father, can do more than this : he can make death better than life, and render your last your happiest hour. He can banish every gloomy fear, and make death itself wear a smile, and seem a messenger of heavenly love, come to summon you to the abodes of glory. He can gladden with immortal hopes your dying moments ; and give you an abundant entrance into his eternal kingdom.

§ 16. Perhaps the scenes through which God leads you are scenes of trial, yet consider, whatever be the immediate source of affliction, that trials come from God. Even when wicked men are the authors of his sufferings, the Christian may say, "They are the sword, the hand is thine." That afflictions come from God, is the declaration of his word. "When we are judged, we are chastened of the Lord, that we should not be condemned with the world." "If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons : for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not ? But if ye be without chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then are ye bastards, and not sons."¹ As afflictions thus proceed from God, so they are declared to be the effect of his love. "As many as I love, I rebuke and

(r) 1 Cor. xi. 32.

(s) Heb. xii. 7, 8.

and acquainted with grief. Yet in the darkest da
many are the sources of Christian consolation. I
ing you through the fire, or the waters, of afflict
of the gracious design he has in view. He chasten
profit, that we may be partakers of his holin
afflicts you to ripen your soul for that happier lan
affliction is ever felt. He sinks you on earth tha
rise in heaven ; and makes you sad for a momen
he may make you happier through eternity there.
various ends to accomplish in the afflictions of h
Sometimes he afflicts them to humble and to purify
To keep him humble, Paul was afflicted ;” and
“ When he hath tried me, I shall come forth as g
his word declares, “ Now, no chastening for
seemeth to be joyous, but grievous : nevertheless,
yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto t
are exercised thereby.”⁷ At other times the Fathe
designs to brighten their graces, to strengthen thei
patience. Hence his word says, “ The trying o
worketh patience.”⁸ “ Now for a season (if need
in heaviness through manifold temptations ; that
your faith, being much more precious than of ge
richeth might be found unto praise and honour

not seen."b At other times, by chastening them, he teaches them to exercise resignation and submission. "Tribulation worketh patience."c On some occasions afflictions are employed to restore wanderers to the path of peace. The Psalmist said, "Before I was afflicted I went astray; but now I have kept thy word."d At others, afflictions make them feel more sensibly the vanity of all below, and endear their God and Saviour to them. Then the language of the Psalmist expresses the feelings of the humble, happy soul. "Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire beside thee. My flesh and my heart fail: but God is the strength of my heart, and my portion for ever."e

§ 17. While such are God's gracious designs in the chastisements his hand inflicts, the Christian has reason to rejoice, even in afflictions. God promises to support his suffering family, and teaches them to contemplate a day when all their afflictions end. All their trials are under his control, are sent in mercy, and will end in good. "We know that all things work together for good to them that love God."f While they last he promises to his children divine support. "God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble: therefore will not we fear, though the earth be removed, and though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea." "When my father and my mother forsake me, then the Lord will take me up."g "I, even I, am he that comforteth you." "When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee: and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee; when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned; neither shall the flame kindle upon thee."h "I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee."i How precious are these promises! What more can be desired than the support and presence of our God!

Does affliction cloud your sky? do sorrows overwhelm your sinking spirits? yet forget not that God is kind. "He careth for you."k Gracious declaration! what words can be more expressive of his tender interest in your happiness? "He careth for you." Not only gives you blessings, but *cares* for your welfare; makes your little interests his concern. Surely

(b) 2 Cor. iv. 17, 18. (c) Rom. v. 4. (d) Ps. cxix. 67.
 (e) Ps. lxxiii. 25, 26. (f) Rom. viii. 28.
 (g) Ps. xli. 1, 2, 7; xxvii. 10; xxxiii. 18, 19. (h) Isa. li. 12; xlii. 2.
 (i) Heb. xiii. 5, 6. (k) 1 Pet. v. 7.

all must be right that so gracious a Friend appoints must tend to good that so kind a Father ordains! "He spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us; how shall he not with him also freely give us all things? Did he thus give his best Beloved for you, and can you that he will refuse you any real good? Are you opposed with sickness and pain? God could give you health: to you health would be a little thing compared with giving Christ.—Surely if he does not give you health, the reason must be, he sees it best to appoint you sickness. Are you poor? God could give you wealth. He gave you Christ; and keeps you poor, the cause must be, that poverty is best for you. Were riches best, he who gave Christ would give you riches. Whatever you fancy good you may desire, you may argue, If this were real good, God would give it me. He who gave Christ, that great and precious boon, would not refuse this trifling gift, if this would prove a blessing to me. A suffering Christian, after a night of pain, observed, "It has been a night of great pain, but it was a night appointed me to see Jesus Christ, and sure it must be a good one that he appointed. Had I lain down my life for you, your good nights would have been my anxious care." Thus reason respecting heavenly Father's conduct. Doubt not his love, who sent his only-begotten Son for the few moments of time, who sent his only-begotten Son

scenes of life appear ! What poor trifles will its pleasures seem ! what dying things its friendships ! what little griefs its heaviest woes ! And when ten thousand ages have fled away, and you look back on what now seems like a sea of trouble, that ocean of affliction will be like the drop of a bucket. Formidable as it once seemed, it will then appear like nothingness itself. Let the thought of eternity mingle with the trials of time ; and its weightiest trials will be felt " as light affliction, which is but for a moment." And while those momentary trials continue, think whither they hasten you. Every day of affliction hastens the children of God to the haven of eternal peace. As the tossing of a tempest may hurry a shattered ship sooner to its harbour than the fairest wind that blows ; so the rough storm of worldly sorrow, as well as the peaceful gale, and perhaps more hastily, may urge the Christian to the port where every storm shall cease. Keep that peaceful port in view. Faith will soon be lost in sight ; hope make way for certainty ; time and its shadows be perhaps almost forgotten amidst the glories of eternity. The dark night of life will shortly close ; affliction's last tempest be hushed in peace ; and the bright morning of eternal day open on the tranquil and enraptured soul. Then farewell to chastisement, to grief, and pain.

§ 19. Happy are they who enjoy the love and care of a gracious Saviour, and a heavenly Father ! Happy amidst the scenes of time, and happier when quitting them for ever ! Their great work is done, their best interests are secure. Should even sudden death hurry them from health and vigour to the cold tomb, yet they are blessed, whose home is in the skies, whose Father is in heaven. When life declines, glory will dawn ; and the moment that bears them hence will bear them home.

Come, my fellow-pilgrim, let us contemplate that home. How fair is the prospect ! how bright the eternal day ! how sweet the peace the hope of that eternal day imparts ! The Christian is blessed, who looking beyond the shadows of time, can exclaim, " As for me, I shall behold thy face in righteousness." " Thou shalt guide me with thy counsel, and afterward receive me to glory." Though my path may be rough and thorny, thou shalt guide me, and, blessed hope ! thou wilt receive me—even me to glory. The world have

that you dread descending into it, though it is the eternal day.

§ 20. Think then of Jesus's power to save, at even the solemn hour of dissolution, with a hope of immortality, that death shall be swallowed up in victory. It can make pain, sickness, and death, the way of a new way of life. Not only apostles and martyrs, but unknown to the busy world, cheered by his presence, have passed the gulf of death in peace. I have known one say, "Blessed be the Lord! the sting of death is taken away. I feel that the fear of death is taken away. I wish I think every day, when it is night, I am a day nearer my blessed home." I have heard another humble disciple of the Saviour say, "The blood of Jesus cleanses from all unrighteousness. It has cleansed me. I hope and trust Jesus Christ is my support, and my all. The nearer I get to my end, I hope the more comfort I find. The nearer I get, the more fear is gone." I have known a young folk say, "I love the holy Jesus, when about to quit this world, declared that he would not on any account change places with his friends; thinking her condition so much better than this because her course was nearer ending. "I am content," said she, "when I think myself worse. I never


were not uttered by apostles or martyrs; but were the mony of plain and humble Christians to the support : gracious Lord imparted. How precious such support ! ered by it, what is death ? How its terrors dwindle into gnificance ! Death thus cheered, is indeed the coming of Saviour, to call his followers home. The Lord Jesus ist gave this view of death. "I go to prepare a place for . And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come n, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there may be also." How pleasing a representation of that soon event ! Death but the coming of a Saviour. Then what to die, but to lean a languishing head on his compassion-arm, and to commit a ransomed spirit to his faithful care ? ould he personally appear to take his followers home, who loves him would fear to die ? Ah, could we look into unseen world, and behold his dealings with his humble k, what sacred peace and holy ecstasy would the view ine ! Then we might hear him say to ministering angels, o fetch my follower ; let all her trials end. Let disease the captive free. Let it dissolve the bonds of transient ; let the purchase of my blood ascend to me ; and let promise be fulfilled, Where I am shall ye be also." Yes, th to the blood-bought family of God is the coming of is ; and it is his presence that has enabled some to say, opy, happy ; and others to expire with, Victory ! Victory ! their dying lips. One to breathe out her spirit, saying, w I will go to my God ; and another to declare, My iour has sent his messenger for me, and I wish to go to l.

My fellow-pilgrim, when you read of the supports that ers have found, look to him who upheld their fainting ds, for your support in the last struggles of dissolving ure. Cleave to him, and he will not forget you in that ul hour ; for he is the same yesterday, to-day, and for r.

"Come now, be his in ev'ry part!
Nor give him less than all your heart.
And when the closing scenes prevail,
When wealth, state, pleasure, all must fail,
All that a foolish world admires,
Or passion craves, or pride inspires,
At that important hour of need,
Jesus shall prove a friend indeed.
His hand shall smoothe thy dying bed,
His arm sustain thy drooping head ;

And when the painful struggle's o'er,
And that vain thing, the world, no more,
He'll bear his humble friend away
To rapture and eternal day."

Now raise your eyes, and look beyond the gloomy vale of death. The Scriptures teach you, that to the believer death is gain.^m Death is yours.ⁿ That last enemy, through heavenly love, is constrained to become a friend. Death will end your labours and your dangers; will conclude your trials and reward your toils; will bring the crown of victory, and satisfy your longing desires for immortality. Of those who sleep in Jesus it is said, "Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord."^o "I beheld, and, lo, a great multitude, which man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and peoples, and tongues, stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands; and cried with a loud voice, saying, Salvation to our God, which is seated upon the throne, and unto the Lamb. These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb."^p In that abode it is said, "And I saw no temple therein: for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of it. And the city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it; for the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof."^q "And there shall be no more curse



place where all the family of Jesus shall see him as he is ; and in his presence spend eternal ages.

Think of that happy world as that which God prepares. There Jesus declares are many peaceful dwellings. He has said, "In my Father's house are many mansions. I go to prepare a place for you."^(v) Those happy mansions God, your gracious Father, for his family prepares. This sweet, this cheering fact, his own word declares. It is said of Abraham, "He looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and Maker is God."^(u) Of others eminent for piety it is said, "They desire a better country, that is, an heavenly: wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God ; for he hath prepared for them a city."^(w) What must that abode be, which a God of love provides for those he condescends to own ! How rich must be the inheritance which God himself prepares ! How immense the love, which leads him thus to take delight in the happiness of ransomed penitents !

In a passage, if possible, still more delightful, it is said, by the Lord Jesus himself, "Fear not, little flock ; for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom."^(v) Here God appears the Father of the family that is bound for heaven ; and a Father so interested in their happiness, that to give them a kingdom above is pleasure even to him. Gracious God ! can it be that such is thy interest in the happiness of those poor penitents thy love has ransomed from eternal death ! Oh what heights, and depths, and breadths, and lengths of love are thine ! O what vileness is ours, if we do not love thee with all the grateful fervour of affectionate hearts !—Ah, let us repeat the charming words once more, "It is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom." And will he give that kingdom as the completion of his amazing designs of love ? And is he pleased to give you the kingdom ? Ah, what must be that heaven, which such a God, which such a Father, gives, and delights in giving, to those he loves with an everlasting love ! Surely we may exclaim, O vile ungrateful hearts, to love this heavenly friend no more ! O vain deluded minds, to see one attraction in any thing beneath the sun, while such a kingdom waits our coming !

(d) John xiv. 2.


(u) Heb. xi. 10.
(w) Luke xii. 32.

(v) Heb. xi. 13—16.

That gracious God, who thus blesses his humble friends, will bless them in the abode his love prepares with all the comforts of his presence. Of them, when fixed there, his word asserts, "Therefore are they before the throne of God, and serve him day and night in his temple : and he that sitteth on the throne shall dwell among them. They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more ; neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat. For the Lamb, which is in the midst of the throne, shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters."x "Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God. And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes ; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain : for the former things are passed away."y

Oh, happy, happy they, who thus rest in the presence of their God ! They have done with the dark services of time ; and all they love, and all they wish, all that a vast eternity requires, to make it one blest scene of unmingled joy, they find in God. Oh, happy end to life's short pilgrimage ! O happy abode ! Why does not every follower of the Lamb, with longing, ardent, restless desires, wait for that peaceful home ?

§ 22. There too the disciple of Immanuel shall rest with



"My knowledge of that state is small,
"The eye of faith is dim;
"But 'tis enough that Christ knows all,
"And I shall be with him."

Cheering prospect! The Christian may say, I would not wander on earth a weary pilgrim through eternal days; nor would I find my endless home in some remote province of my heavenly Father's kingdom. This would be banishment to me. The heaven I seek, must be the heaven where my Redeemer reigns. Not all his glowing works can bound the flight of my aspiring soul. It presses beyond them all, and seeks a rest more glorious than their brilliant fires, more lasting than their short duration. When my freed spirit takes its last farewell of earth, those golden lamps that glitter in the firmament, shall not stop its rising flight. They are mean compared with the mansions to which I aspire, those mansions where I may dwell with God. They are not my Redeemer's home, but to the world that is would I ascend. There, blessed Jesus! would my aspiring spirit fix, and there alone. There it can rest for ever. There it can love for ever. There it can praise for ever.—My fellow-pilgrim, is not this your hope? do you not join in saying, "My Saviour, the soul thou hast redeemed presses on to thee; O receive it to thine home, when its wandering pilgrimage on earth concludes?" It is a gladdening thought that he has promised to do this, and has, doubtless, to millions that once trod our earth, fulfilled the gracious promise, "Where I am, there shall also my servant be," and he will fulfil it to myriads more. Happy they! while we mourn, they rejoice; they rest while we labour; praise when we sigh; are secure when dangers threaten us. They hear no complaints; shed no tears; utter no groans. They are in the dwelling of their Lord. Blessed change! from the gloomy chamber of pain; from the cottage of poverty; from the society of feeble friends; or the labours of the shop, or the field, or the mill. There absent from the body they are present with the Lord.

§ 23: Perhaps you mourn the loss of some, once the beloved associates of your days, and fellow-pilgrims in the course to heaven. Come then, let us meditate on those few sweet words, "Absent from the body and present with the Lord." These few sweet words describe their happiness; and if we

follow the holy Jesus, tell us what shall soon be ours. When meditating on these words, we may confess that the weakness of our faith is in no way more apparent than by our languid desires after heavenly blessedness, and by our sorrow for those who leave time for eternity. We mourn when the blessed rejoice; and shed tears for those who will never shed them more. We lament a change, with which those on whom it has passed are infinitely satisfied. We mourn over their beloved remains, as if all we loved in them were there. But the better part has fled—the dark coffin does not receive it—the solemn grave will never confine it. The beloved *spirit*, which gave animation to the lifeless *body*, will never become an inhabitant of the tomb. “It is absent from the body, and present with the Lord.” Blessed, thrice blessed, change! more worthy for ourselves to be welcomed with eagerness than beheld with dislike! more worthy for those most dear to us to be reviewed with tears of joy and gratitude than remembered with regret.

“Absent from the body:” the feeble, languishing, disordered body. Ah, happy friends, beloved fugitives from these vain scenes, mourn for us; we need not mourn for you. The gloomy scenes, which strike our imaginations with regret, disturb not yours. The dismal hearse, the narrow coffin, the gloomy grave, affect you not. Absent from the body, you are far from these. However bitterly we mourn at your fu-

—you are departed. You are not in the dust. There rests the forsaken dwelling; but you are not there. You are gone. The tomb then does not contain our treasures. Ye are now saints on high, whom we lament below.

"Forgive, ye blest, the tributary tear
 "That mourns your exit from a world like this;
 "Forgive the wish that would have kept you here,
 "And stay'd your progress to the seats of bliss.
 "No more confin'd to darksome realms of night,
 "No more frail tenants pent in mortal clay:
 "Now should we rather hail your glorious flight,
 "And trace your progress to the realms of day."

Let *faith* then follow you *now*, and *we* will follow you *ere long*. Let *faith* trace your course to brighter worlds. It is true, you are "absent from the body;" but, O you are "present with the Lord." Though absent, you are not lost. Though removed from us, you are removed to better society and fairer scenes.

"Present with the Lord." Oh, happy conquerors! why then do we mourn your removal from such society as ours—infinitely better society is yours. It is true, you are severed for a time from all the tender names of earth; but "dearer, better friends" exist beyond the grave, and those dearer, better friends are yours.

"Present with the Lord." It is this that must complete our happiness, and this is yours. The heavenly mansions would not be so blest were not our God and yours, your Redeemer and ours, there. You see them without the thick veil of flesh between. You are not in a remote province of the heavenly empire. You dwell in the palace itself; for you are "present with the Lord." Happy they who sojourned with the Lord of heaven when he dwelt on earth! but, O more happy, far more happy you, who see him in his heavenly temple, and see him as he is! Now can you sound his praise in strains to mortal ears unknown; and now enjoy the infinite riches of his love.

"Present with the Lord." Ye dear departed friends, what blest employments, what delights, are yours! Eye hath not seen them, ear hath not heard them, heart hath not conceived them. Our imaginations trace you through the scenes of mortal converse. We see you as we saw you once, and regret the pleasing hours which you and we once enjoyed—but, oh! why regret them? far better employments engage you

than those of earth; far better delights are yours than ever found in wandering, in conversing, in resting with

“ Worlds would not bribe you back to tread

“ Again life's dreary waste.

“ To see again your sky o'erspread

“ With all the gloomy past.”

“ Present with the Lord.” Ye dear departed, destined to outlive a falling world! ye are not lost! Fain would we had you continue longer here; but why continue? What taken from your time is added to your eternity. Our memories tell us of prospects you indulged in for earth and time, and these views are blasted. Yes, blessed disappointment! earth is changed for heaven, and hopes of transient comfort for the fruition of unfailing joy. You formed plans for a voyage, but God took you to the harbour. You sought tranquillity through a few declining days on earth; but He called you to “rapture and bliss” in the skies. You expected to pass a few more days with beloved friends below; but He has snatched you hence to join with nobler friends above. You bless that friendly wave of time, which, while you thought it was bearing you to some earthly attainment, has borne you in heaven.

“ Present with the Lord.” Blessed conquerors, the Lord has kept you safe! Had you continued longer here, temptation might have seduced you, Satan might have overcome you, and


sires gratified? Rather should we congratulate your departure, while our faith pursues you to your heavenly dwellings.

"Present with the Lord," but not with us; yet may we ere long be so with you. You cannot come again to us, but we may shortly go to you. Our loss is the loss of your beloved society for a little span; but soon will that little span be past. Then we too will leave our feeble, clay-built tabernacles, we too be "absent from the body and present with the Lord."*

§ 24. Admitted to that happy home, and blessed with "the crown, not of merit but of grace," the Christian will find all his toils and labours amply recompensed. Where but one talent has been possessed, and well improved, the gracious Saviour will manifest as much approbation, as he will to those, who may have had many, but not have made more improvement of them. Perhaps, if your abilities are small, and your opportunities of doing good very limited, you may be disposed to anticipate a less share of the Saviour's favour, than you imagine will be the happiness of those who have many more talents than you. But it is not the number of talents you possess, but the improvement of them, which the eternal Master notices. To him who had five talents intrusted to him, and who could say, "Behold, I have gained beside them five talents more;" his Lord said, "Well done, thou good and faithful servant; thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy lord." But to him who had made an equal improvement of two talents, his Lord said, "Well done, good and faithful servant; thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy lord."^c The number of talents possessed was different, but the improvement was equal, and their lord's expressions of approbation equal. Though all that the blest in heaven will enjoy is undeserved, and all flows from heavenly

* Perhaps there may be a propriety in the writer observing, that most of this section appeared in a periodical publication. It was written on the evening previous to the funeral of a dear and affectionate, a kind and valuable, father, John Baxter Pike; a father, to whose care and kindness he is unspeakably indebted—a father, who, to promote the welfare of his family, struggled hard through a chequered and stormy life; and who, after manifesting much peace in the prospect of eternity, exchanged this mortal for an immortal state; on December 11, 1811.

(c) Matt. xxv. 20—23.



Many wealthy Christians, who were applauded in their day, may sink far below the poor believer through life in obscurity and want, but whose piety was fervent, whose heart more liberal, than were those of their brother. The unfamed tenant of the cottage may rise higher in glory than the possessors of station and extensive fame. For in many instances he will be found to have been better improved, than in ten, or twenty.

The pious female, only known in the narrow sphere of domestic life; the laborious sabbath-school teacher, whose energies were employed in training the young; may, in numberless cases, rise far above ministerial honors, popular and admired in their day, but whose doing good was not proportioned to their talents, whose more splendid talents were not improved, while the humbler ones of their more pious friends.

Whatever be your situation, let consideration thus animate you to press forward to eminent service. The Lord will approve of your feeble attempts to do his will. If all you can do is little, yet do that little, and let it be much. Where nothing more can be imparted, "cold water only," given to a disciple, "in the

deemer! I know I may, and O let this condescend-
e of thine, constrain me to lay at thy feet whatever I

Are these your hopes? O soul-reviving hopes! Such
might seem all we want, yet more will the Saviour's
give. To enjoy his presence, to be for ever with the
is the height of heavenly happiness. But another
of joy, shall be the company of all the spirits of the
The heavenly home is described as their abode. In
ternal union there are joined all the angels of light,
the ransomed heirs of glory.

"The holy host of saints, that once have known
"Each dreary path in life's perplexing maze,
"There ever circle yon eternal throne
"With harpings high of inexpressive praise."

hem the word of truth declares, They which shall be
ted worthy to obtain that world—are equal unto the
and are the children of God.' "Ye are come unto
Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly
em, and to an innumerable company of angels, and to
rits of just men made perfect."^g "Thou wast slain,
st redeemed us to God by thy blood, out of every kin-
nd tongue, and people, and nation."^h

st glorious joy will union to this blessed family impart!
dwell the great benefactors of mankind, apostles and
ists, who sacrificed every earthly good to lead immor-
titudes to heaven. There martyrs, dear to our hearts
ir faith and patience, rest in eternal repose. There
he memorials of whose piety has animated ours, all are
led; and shine far brighter in their Father's kingdom,
ney ever shone on earth. Unnumbered millions that
net below, there meet never to part. Amidst that
company are doubtless found a Baxter and a Howe,
ott and a Brainerd, a Martyn and a Ward, and mil-
lore, perhaps less known on earth, but not less happy
en. And now their piety glows with purer lustre;
the lovely graces that religion produced in their dis-
is and characters, are far more lovely there. O glo-
appiness, to join that blissful throng! and far from all

(f) Luke xx. 35, 36.

(g) Heb. xii. 22-24.

(h) Rev. v. 9, 11, 12.

SOME EMINENT SAINTS, WHO HAVE LEFT THIS WORLD, long after their departure hence. Thus the represented as sitting down with Abraham, Isaac, Lazarus is described as conveyed to Abraham's Dives as knowing Lazarus and Abraham.^k At of our Lord's transfiguration, the distinguished appeared in glory, (probably as they appear in who conversed with him, were known to be M jah.^l There is no reason for supposing, that w recognized in the world of glory, it should be : known who others are, and whence they can rather believe, that as Abraham is there know Abraham who once forsook his country at Go saints of later days enjoy the mutual happiness and being known.

A still more conclusive argument to prove shall be acquainted with each other, arises from of the apostle Paul, in which he expressed his seeing and recognizing his Christian friends, 'our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing? are n the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at his com expected in a happier state to renew his intimate who had been converted under his ministry at

much and mutually beloved on earth, and helpers of each other in the way to glory, shall not renew their friendship with each other there? Important as is the connexion between the pastor and the flock, these connexions, when sanctified by grace, are often much more important. Here religious intercourse takes place more dear and more continued; prayers as fervent, and more frequent, are offered in union. Surely therefore we may believe that when the minister meets the people of his charge, the flock he has been instrumental in leading on to heaven, Christian relatives and friends, united in bands as sacred and as strong, will renew their friendship, and find in the society of each other new delight, infused into the bliss even of eternity.

It may further be observed, that the comfort which the gospel administers to those who mourn friends that sleep in Jesus, appears to be drawn in a great measure from the hope of their happy reunion, and their eternal dwelling in the presence of their Lord. The inspired writer says, "I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died, and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him. For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord. Wherefore comfort one another with these words."ⁿ The heathen sorrowed without hope, for they had no well founded hope that their departed friends had entered a happy immortality; and their friends once lost seemed lost for ever: but if pious friends did not meet and recognize each other in heaven, the Christian would be as much without hope of beholding his loved and lost companions, as even the heathens themselves; and if not lost to happiness they would be lost to him: the moment of death would be the moment of an eternal separation; and what had become of them would be to him unknown. *Surely the language of the divine word leads to ideas very different from this!* It speaks of these friends being happy,'

Their union is not the union of a day: it will never be followed by a painful part the hope of it animate those, whom piety defying bands, to walk with God, to pray as here, as they hope, through everlasting day God together there! O happy meeting! w more to share each other's griefs, no more other's woes, no more to grieve for each o to share in each other's joys, to triumph in piness, and mutually to behold friends estimable below, infinitely more amiable, and glorious and happy.

§ 27. Think too, that all these blessings and happiness of that world is everlasting. T sickness and pain, temptation and danger, excluded for ever. There, where all is peace and praise for ever. O, blissful day! think, when I shall see my Saviour! with him and be like him. Then shall I see love, and praise my Lord, more and better days! Eternal days! who shall unfold the transporting words—Eternal days? O look the end of time. Let faith assist you to disc

cares, and sighings for ever fled away. "Violence no more be heard in their land, wasting nor destruction in their borders; but they shall call their walls Salvation, their gates Praise. The sun shall be no more their light day; neither for brightness shall the moon give light unto them: but the Lord shall be unto them an everlasting light, their God their glory. Their sun shall no more go down; nor shall their moon withdraw itself: for the Lord shall be their everlasting light, and the days of their mourning shall be ended." Before them all is glorious. Before them is one immense eternal day of bliss. They see no end, they fear no ill. How brightly shines the sun of their happiness! how happily glide on the infinite ages of their felicity! So forward in thought myriads of numberless ages. Imagine years as countless as the blades of grass that cover the land, or as the drops that fill the ocean, to have passed away. Then look again at the inhabitants of heaven; their light is still bright. No cloud has darkened its glory in the immense duration that has passed. Their happiness is still undiminished. No transient pain has brought a momentary interruption of their felicity, in all the mighty periods that are gone. For no moment, during all those countless ages, is the stain of imperfection polluted them. No ruffling passion has ever been felt within their peaceful breasts. The light of God's countenance has never been withdrawn. No fears without, no fears or corruptions within, have disturbed the sweet composure of their happy spirits. Through periods long, that, compared with them, time and all its ages is but a twinkling of an eye, the unruffled day of heaven has passed blissfully along. Nor do they mourn its departure; no eternal day is not shortened; eternal felicity is not lessened. The immense and amazing prospect of everlasting life still unfolds before their view, as bright, as fair, as gladdening, and as long as ever. Happy conquerors! Imagination fails, and cannot reach their blessedness, nor comprehend what it is to be enjoying heaven.

The eternal God is their Father, and they are for ever with the Lord. But, O! what no heart can conceive, no imagination comprehend, you, my brother, or my sister, may enjoy. Be thou faithful unto death, and that eternal day

What its cares, pleasures, pains, but shadows signify ! O what is redeeming love, that opens to you triumphant prospects !

§ 28. Soon will all the glories of these bright upon the faithful soul. Though eternal day will soon begin. When the husband sows his seed to the ground, a few wintry days and bright suns shine, a few moons wax and wane, a harvest comes, and the ripened crop is gathered in. So fast comes the harvest of eternity. The Christian's best days are hastening him forward to its solemnity. The sad and gloomy days of darkness are carrying him to the world where gloomy seasons and distress are unknown for ever. The Christian's state in this is that of a mariner pursuing a long voyage, yet to his native land. Month after month, all he beholds is the sea and the sky. When within a day's sail of home he sees nothing but sea and sky : the unvarying prospect as it was months before ; yet his situation is very different. Then he was far from harbour, now a few hours will bring him there. So the Christian hastening to heaven has more of that happy home than he did when he first began his course, yet he is nearer every hour. He is draw-

ll their glory, shall expire? Am I, unmoved, to behold wreck of nature and the crush of worlds," to see, with-
 ret, the bright lights of heaven sink into eternal dark-
 and then shall I, amid the blest inhabitants of heaven,
 that my day of glory and happiness will never, never
 Then shall I, with all the blood-bought nations of the
 walk in the light of the heavenly city, and dwell
 the throne of God? Rise then, my soul, rise to thy
 home. There place thy treasures; there lay up thy
 there fix thy love; there hope to praise thy Saviour
 y Lord; and wait and watch, till he shall call thee

ly cherish the thoughts of that felicity, and strive, and
 by meditation, to check unreasonable attachment to
 ing world; to sit loose to all below; and to live as
 no hopes ere long to live in heaven. Why are not the
 ers of the Lamb more eager for their rest? Does the
 tost by storms, long once more to reach his home?
 ild desire manhood? the sick man, health? the trades-
 ant for riches? the prisoner for liberty? the condemned
 'don? and should not you desire the blessedness you
 Is heaven indeed the object of your choice, and your
 l-for home, why not more eager for it? How unreason-
 love a dangerous journey more than a peaceful rest!
 erous ocean more than the safe and pleasant harbour!
 loves the ship that wafts him over raging waters, more
 he country where all who are dearest to him dwell?
 loves the horse on which he rides, or the carriage in
 he travels, more than the dear home, where he rests
 ce? Alas, such is their attachment to this world, who
 heirs of a better. We profess to take heaven for our
 ; we know that all, and more than all, that recommends
 rthly dwellings, is found in the eternal mansions;—
 ; that should be the dearest, and to whom we are most
 —the surest refuge; the securest rest;—and yet how
 ave we little familiarity with that better country! How
 ado has God to get us home! Ah, stupified hearts! to
 journey, a toilsome, a dangerous journey, more than
 rlasting home, whence toils and dangers are banished
 er. Watch against this dangerous, this guilty fondness
 present state. Think much of heaven. If your home

world.

§ 30. He who has thus, in the preceding paragraph, vowed to help you in your spiritual pilgrimage, is now to lay down his pen ; yet before he lays it down, for ever, let him once more say to you, Go onward to Jesus, and keeping God and heaven in view. long, when summoned hence, you may depart in joy, say, " I have fought a good fight, I have finished my race, I have kept the faith : henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give me at that day ; and not to me only, but to all them also that love his appearing." Farewell, vain scenes of transient fondness and dissipation ! Farewell, world of real grief, but fancied pleasure ! Farewell, sin, and, with sin, farewell to sorrow ! But bright and blessed immortality ! Welcome the secure and dissoluble love ! Welcome the mansions in my Father's house ! Welcome the kingdom of my redeeming Lord ! the peace of joy, the crown of glory ! Few and evil have been the days of my pilgrimage, but now those few days have come to their end ; and I enter an eternal day, and weeks, and months, and years, have now all in all become one eternal day. Happy are they, who, being

n us, and hide us from the face of him that sitteth on throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb"—then, and for ever, may you, with ransomed millions, unite in sweet and everlasting anthem, "Blessing, and honour, and power, be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, unto the Lamb, for ever and ever."

1. Probably some who may glance over the preceding are destitute of an interest in all the blessings there detailed. Is this the case with you, whose eyes are now fixed on this little book? Are you a careless profligate? an open sinner? or an almost Christian? If either be the case, let me entreat you to reflect on your dreadful condition. What you are, if you are not a humble follower of the Saviour, your state is fearful in the extreme. In those blessings, that have been described as the Christian's portion, you have no

God is not your reconciled Father; Jesus Christ is not your Shepherd; heaven is not your home. As sure as scriptures are true, you are an heir of death, a slave of sin, a child of wrath, an enemy of God, a traveller to hell. At every moment you are on the brink of destruction. There is but a breath in your nostrils between you and hell; and death is wanting to sink you there but God's command. A single day, an accident, or almost any trifle, may be sufficient to cut your thread of life, and plunge you in eternal despair. There is no wide gulf between you and the torments of eternity, the howlings of accursed spirits, and the horrors of damnation. The place of misery is your own place: you are there for it. Your sins are all unpardoned—wrath follows, and hell is waiting to receive you. Death, your dread foe, is winging his flight. Your last moment, your last comfort, are slipping from you. In Christ you have no interest. For you his blood is vain. In heaven you have no inheritance. There is a blessed heaven, but not for you. Unhappy creature! Do not trifle with this warning, but trifling will not alter your condition, or save your ruined soul. You may laugh at fervent piety, but will you laugh in the sad world to come? When lost for ever; when before you is eternal misery; when millions of years of misery will not lessen your wretchedness, nor seas of tears efface one guilty stain; when the world is gone, and every pleasure gone, and your soul eternally lost: then what will you think of a slighted

Saviour, and a neglected gospel ? O, my fellow-sinner, of eternity ! think of eternal banishment from heaven ! of eternal wailings and despair in hell ! If the Saviour soften not your heart, let his terrors alarm you ! Flee from wrath to come ! Ere long, if you had them, you gladly give millions of worlds for an opportunity to flee from endless wrath ; but it will be too late then. O pity you it is not too late now ! You may have mercy, will you it ? The Saviour would have compassion upon you, can have so little for yourself, as to neglect his great salvation. O pity an unhappy creature condemned to die ! You an unhappy creature. Seek mercy, while mercy may be found. God Almighty make you so wise and so happy. Yet you will not, if you will continue to slight a dying Saviour, a gracious God, and your own immortal soul, then make most of your few vain delights. They are all you will have. Rather, remember that perhaps the decree is forth already against you, Cut it down, why cumbereth ground. O have compassion on yourself, and pursue blessings now, which, on the bed of death, at the judgment, and through vast eternity, you will wish to have obtained. May the God of all grace make you thus wise and happy ! and raise you from the death of sin unto the life of righteousness ! Amen.

